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ALTHOUGH receipts of sheep at Denver from Colorado decreased 180,000 during the first three months of 1927, due to curtailed feeding in that state, receipts from other western states increased 92,507 head, or over 200 per cent. Receipts from Utah increased from 29,440 in 1926 to 76,787 in 1927. From Idaho they increased from 1,768 in 1926 to 29,855 in 1927.

Owners, producers, and feeders all through the West are rapidly finding that Denver offers them the most advantageous market for their lambs, and that they can dispose of almost any number any day of the week at Denver.

Producers and shippers of both sheep and cattle should watch the prices being paid at Denver closely the coming season. It is expected buyers from the range sections of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska and other states will have many orders for restocking of ranges with cattle in at Denver.

Ship 'Em to DENVER

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Administration of Western State Lands for Grazing

BY HERBERT C. HANSON
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THE EXTENT of the land in possession of the western states is larger than many perhaps realize. In these twelve states, including Texas, there is a total of about 43,000,000 acres of state-owned land. This acreage is nearly one-half as large as the total unappropriated and unreserved land under the control of the United States Department of the Interior. The amount owned by each state varies from 29,000 acres in Nevada to about 10,000,000 in Arizona. The usual amount is about 3,000,000 acres. The measure recently passed by Congress and signed by the President, confirming title of the states to the lands ceded them by the federal government, gives greater stability to these lands.

The importance of this land to grazing is shown by the fact that about one-half of the total state land, or about 20,000,000 acres, is under lease for grazing purposes, yielding about $1,000,000 annually in rentals. Arizona and New Mexico lease out the largest areas—5,500,000 and 7,500,000 acres, respectively; but Colorado and Montana derive the largest annual incomes—$300,000 and $240,000.

PAINTED DESERT RANGE LAND NEAR LITTLE COLORADO RIVER IN ARIZONA

The administration of these lands varies considerably from state to state. The rental fee would naturally vary, because the grazing value of the land varies. But there is little uniformity in regard to the term of lease and other administrative matters. Because of this lack of uniformity, and because of the importance of these lands to western grazing, it was considered desirable to describe briefly the procedure used in each state. The data were secured from the state land laws and biennial reports of the state land offices, as well as by correspondence with the land commissioners. The writer is under obligation to the commissioners for their courtesy and co-operation in furnishing documents and information.

Difficulty was encountered in tabulating the data because of the lack of uniformity in the biennial reports and in the land laws. Often the statistics were incomplete, or items that were separated in one state were lumped together in another. One commissioner wrote: "I am sorry that I cannot give you these figures more accurately, but it does not appear that any tabulations of sold and unsold lands have been made by my predecessors during the last four years." The differences in soil and climate in the various states necessitate variation in the land laws. The biennial report is published primarily for the benefit of one state; so uniformity of treatment is not essential. This paper may be helpful, however, not only to stockmen and students of grazing problems, but also to land office officials in showing how other states handle their public lands.

For each state the following subjects are discussed: rental fee, term of lease, preferential right to re-lease, protection from sale during life of lease, maximum acreage leased to one individual, total acreages under lease and income derived from them, regulations regarding range improvements, sale price and rules regarding the sale of state lands, total acreages granted to each state, and amounts in possession of states now.

Arizona

Arizona now owns 7,500,000 acres, but when all lands within the state have been surveyed this will be increased to 10,300,000 acres. This land is classified by the land commissioner into: (1) agricultural lands; (2) grazing lands; (3) lands containing timber, stone, or other valuable products; and (4) lands capable of irrigation. In 1926, 5,500,000 acres were leased out for grazing purposes, yielding about $165,000. The rental fee is determined by appraisal, with a minimum of 3 cents per acre. Most of the land is leased at the minimum fee. The leases are subject to reappraisal and readjustment every five years. There is no limit on the amount of land that one individual or company may lease. The term is five years. The laws give the lessee a preferential right to re-lease, but the courts have largely counteracted the value of this privilege by ruling that this is a substantial right, but not an absolute one. A new lessee shall pay the former lessee for value of any improvements or rights, including water rights, or the improvements may be removed by the former lessee.

Land to be sold is appraised, and then sold at public auction at not less than the appraised value. The minimum appraisal value is $3 per acre for grazing land and $25 per acre for land that can be irrigated from an established project. The maximum area that one individual or company may purchase is 640 acres of grazing land or 160 acres of agricultural land. The terms are 7 per cent cash, and the balance in thirty-eight annual payments, at 5 per cent interest per year.

California

The federal government granted this state 5,632,000 acres, of which 800,000 acres of vacant school land remain in possession of the state. This is grazing or desert land. For the biennium ending August 1, 1926, 16,000 acres were under lease for grazing, yielding $3,778. The rental fee is determined by appraisal. The fee averaged 12 cents per acre for the last biennium. There is no limit to the acreage that an individual may lease. The term is ten years, and there is no preferential right to re-lease, nor is the lessee protected from sale during the life of the lease. If the land is sold, the rental is returned to the lessee for the unfinished period.

School lands are sold at public auction to the highest bidder. During the biennium ending August 1, 1926, 48,412 acres were sold, at an average price of $3.28 per acre.

Colorado

The federal government has granted to Colorado a total of 4,472,928 acres. On November 30, 1926, 2,883,470 acres were in the possession of the state. For the biennium ending November 30, 1926, a total of 2,445,080 acres, yielding $626,773, were under lease for grazing and agricultural purposes. Colorado has two kinds of leases: "straight" leases, on which possession must be given the purchaser of the land within sixty days; and "immunity" leases, which provide that the land under lease shall not be sold during the term of the lease without permission of the lessee. The minimum fee for the "straight" lease on land without water is 8 cents per acre per year; with water, 12 cents. For "immunity" leases the water rate is 15 cents per acre per year; without water, 12 cents. The term is five years, and there is no preferential right to re-lease. There is no limit on the acreage that one person may lease. Permission for making improvements other than fences, neces-

sary corrals, wells, water-tanks, and ponds furnishing water for stock, must be secured from the state land board. A new lessee or a purchaser shall pay the former lessee the value of the improvements, as determined by private agreement or by appraisement by the state. No assignment or sublease is valid unless approved by the land board, and if a lessee sublets at a price higher than he is paying, then one-half of the increased rental is payable to the state.

Land is sold at public auction to the highest bidder. No bids will be received for less than the appraised value of the land. One applicant may not include more than 640 acres in one application, but he may make as many applications as he desires. The terms are 10 per cent cash; the balance payable in eighteen annual instalments, with interest at 6 per cent per year.

Idaho

This state has received 3,721,925 acres from the federal government. Up to December 1, 1926, 774,835 acres had been sold, at $13,085,204, leaving 2,947,090 acres in possession of the state. About 1,836,000 acres are classed as grazing lands. The rest is classified as forest land, cut-over land, land susceptible of irrigation, irrigated land, and dry-farming land. On December 1, 1926, a total of 1,654,000 acres were under lease for grazing and 200,284 acres for agricultural purposes. The income during the biennium from grazing leases was $127,237, and $110,988 from agricultural leases. The rental fee for grazing varies from a minimum of 7 cents per acre to 15 cents, and occasionally even more if the land is especially valuable. Some large tracts are leased at 7 cents. The average fee is about 7½ cents. There is no limit to the amount that an individual may lease. The term of the lease is from one to five years. There is no preferential right to re-lease, and, if the land is sold during the term of the lease, there is no refund of rental. A new lessee shall pay the former one for the value of any improvements—such as fencing, buildings, cisterns, wells, growing crops, or recently plowed soil—that the former lessee may have made. When two or more persons apply to lease the same land, the method of sale is public auction. Non-residents are not permitted to lease, the small stock-owner is encouraged, and residents adjacent to the lands to be leased are given preference. The state land commissioner states in his report that the subleasing or selling of the lease at a profit by the lessee should not be tolerated. The state rather than the lessee should receive the amount the land would bring.

During the biennium ending December 1, 1926, 23,458 acres were sold, at $444,898. One individual or company may not purchase more than 320 acres of school land and 160 acres of university land at any given sale. Lands can be sold only at public auction. No land is sold below the appraised valuation, and the minimum valuation is $10 per acre. The terms of sale are one-tenth cash; the balance in forty annual payments, at 6 per cent interest.

Montana

The federal government has granted a total of 5,856,720 acres to Montana. Up to June 30, 1926, 1,364,922 acres had been sold, yielding $21,352,620; leaving 4,667,264 acres in possession of the state. Of this total, 2,242,806 acres were under lease for all purposes on June 30, 1926. About 90 per cent was leased for grazing. The total income derived from all the leases was $376,540. The report of the register of state lands does not segregate the purposes for which the land is leased. The minimum rental fee is 5 per cent of the appraised value of the land, but never less than 10 cents per acre. A bill before the state legislature meeting during the winter, 1926-27, proposes to lower these figures to 3 per cent and 6¼ cents, respectively. The average rental fee for the biennium ending June 30, 1926, was 11 cents per acre. The maximum amount one person may hold under lease at one time is one section of land. The term is five years, and the lessee has the preferential right to re-lease, in that he may take the lease at the highest bid made by any other applicant. Preference is given the applicants who want the land for their own use. The lease is subject to cancellation if the lessee subleases state lands on terms less advantageous to the sublessee than the terms given by the state. A new lessee shall pay the former lessee the reasonable value of improvements, or the improvements may be removed.

GRAMA-GRASS RANGE
About thirty miles northeast of Flagstaff, Arizona. Not utilized for lack of water.

No land shall be sold at less than the appraised value, and in no case for less than $10 per acre. The maximum amount that one person or company may buy is one section. The land is sold at public auction. The terms are at least 15 per cent cash, the balance drawing 5 per cent interest, payable through a period of thirty-three years on the amortization plan.

[*Concluded in June number*]

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY AND THE TARIFF*

BY L. G. CONNOR

Washington, D. C.

MR. EDMINSTER'S BOOK of the above title, mentioned previously in THE PRODUCER, is a study of the relation of the tariff on cattle and beef to the present and future interests of producers and of the public. The contrast between the cattle industry of the range country and that of the Corn Belt is well shown; but there seems to be a too ready assumption of tariff independence on the part of the latter region if, as the author states, the tariff will raise prices. It appears obvious that, if the tariff will raise prices, the farm and regional economy of the entire feeding territory will be strengthened through direct effect on returns, not only to feeders, but to "cash crop" farmers through the stimulation to the local market for feedstuffs.

An error seems to have been made in the statement that the growing tendency for the traditional open-range production to take on a semi-ranch or farm character indicates lessened dependence on the tariff. The increasing use of harvested feeds for the herds to supplement the restricted free ranges appears to show a greater attention to costs and returns, and suggests a direct and immediate effect of temporary and long-time cattle price changes on continuity of production. This applies with equal force to the larger cattlemen and to innumerable settlers west of the one-hundredth meridian. The latter are forced to rely on cattle for a sure livelihood, and much—sometimes nearly all—of their uncertain crop production is for the supply of their herds. If the tariff will stimulate prices, it seems inexact to state that the tariff interest of these people is but slight or non-existent. It may be stronger than in the feeding region.

The author develops our decline in beef production—particularly the sharp change between 1907 and 1914. The causes are discussed, but the real significance is to some extent overlooked. There is a failure to realize that the average age at which cattle were slaughtered in 1925 was at least eighteen months less than in 1890, and that the long-time trend has resulted in little change in beef production between 1890 and 1925. There was, however, a marked decline in number of aged steers, and a gain in number of beef cows and young stock. It seems, too, that the competition between cattle and the plow has been somewhat overdone. It is true that much of the homesteaded land could be plowed; but, in view of the forced reliance of innumerable homesteaders on cattle if they are to remain on their land, it may be questioned whether much of such land in many areas can properly be termed "tillable," at least in the sense of cash-crop production.

The tariff on cattle is presented as distinct from that on beef. The apparent decline in the number of cattle in Canada is stressed, it being overlooked that this was a paper decrease. This point seems related to the author's argument that the Canadian production is too small to concern the domestic cattlemen. But if, as he later states, Canada is primarily fitted for the production of thin cattle, is mainly dependent on the United States market, and the tariff will prove of substantial benefit to producers of thin cattle, then the Dominion surplus merits careful scrutiny. The domestic output seems able abundantly to supply, often completely to saturate, the home market, and any addition from north of the border may affect domestic prices to an extent out of proportion to the actual volume of imports. Such a consideration may not justify a duty on cattle and beef, but it should not be summarily dismissed.

*By L. R. Edminster, Institute of Economics (Washington), Macmillan, 1926.

In an interesting discussion of the effect of tariff changes the statement is made: "It is the Canadian rather than the domestic prices that appear to vary most following changes in the tariff." However, the author's charts show this to be only partly true, and his discussion elsewhere indicates the abnormal conditions which made it possible in 1913-14. Domestic prices had risen sharply because of a temporary shortage. Prices undoubtedly would have gone higher had the duty not been removed in October, 1913. As a consequence of the latter, the heavy imports were not able to depress domestic prices, and, with the duty removed, Canadian prices rose sharply, instead of our prices falling, as would have been the normal result. In 1921, however, domestic prices were arrested in their downward trend, except for a drop, mainly seasonal, at the end of the year. Dominion prices, being without tariff influence, merely followed the world trend. In both countries fat-cattle prices rose in 1922—in the United States apparently because of the tariff, and in Canada because of a temporary shortage resulting from drought. Thereafter domestic prices held, and added to the gains made in 1922, while Canadian prices resumed their downward course, in sympathy with world conditions, after first losing the temporary advances registered under drought conditions. Thus native beef steers at Chicago averaged $8.60 per 100 pounds during 1921-22, and $9.60 during the two following years, while choice fat cattle at Toronto averaged $7.10 during 1921-22, and $6.80 during the next two years. The last two tariff acts, therefore, seem to have been prime factors in causing a decline of only 30 cents per 100 pounds in fat-cattle prices in Canada, as compared with an advance of nearly three and one-half times that much in the United States. It is of interest to note, too, that "chilled beef" steers in Argentina experienced a price decline of 40 cents per 100 pounds at this time; that is, the course of their prices coincided with the Canadian. The author's statement is true in the case of thin cattle in 1921 and later—a result of abnormal domestic supplies. The fact that the course of domestic prices for cattle before and after October, 1913, and September, 1922, was just the opposite in the case of fat cattle from that in the case of thin cattle would indicate highly abnormal conditions, and a need for extreme care before presenting opinions relative to probable normal effects of tariff changes on United States and Canadian cattle prices.

It is said that the number of cattle available for export from Canada is so small, relative to domestic production, that even complete prohibition of imports could not have much effect on prices in this country. But it must not be forgotten that cattle imported from Canada are slaughtered under federal inspection, compete directly with domestic cattle so butchered, and only indirectly with one-third of the United States kill which is slaughtered locally. Prices for this third are determined by prices at the central markets, and it is therefore the central-market competition that determines the effectiveness of the competitive impact of imports from the Dominion. The effect of these imports might or might not justify a tariff on cattle and beef, but is it accurate to claim that an addition of 3 to 5 per cent to the domestic supply would have little influence on prices in this country, particularly with the domestic supply virtually equal to demand?

The opinion is expressed that "in no special branch of the trade are imports really formidable in comparison with domestic production." This refers to the stocker and feeder situation. But during the years 1921 to 1924, inclusive, the average imports of such cattle from Canada formed 4 per cent of the total annual shipments of similar animals from the seven markets of the Middle West. These markets supply most of the Corn Belt feeders, and in them most of the direct effect of imports from the Dominion is felt. It then is radiated to

the other markets. With the domestic market already supplied —often oversupplied—from home sources, it seems inexact to claim that this additional 4 per cent from Canada would have little effect on domestic prices for thin cattle.

The author traces the course of prices for beef at New York and London, and for fat cattle at Chicago and Buenos Aires. The point is again made that, with the removal of the duty in 1913, domestic prices did not decline; but no mention is made of the abnormal conditions which made such a thing possible. The more rapid decline of beef prices in London than in New York during 1921 is not attributed to any effect of the restoration of the duty, but to other factors. The narrowing of the excess of New York over London prices in 1925 is advanced to show that a duty is no longer needed. The statement then is made: "There is little doubt that such restriction of imports as has resulted from the duty on beef has thus far had but slight effect on domestic prices." The recovery of general prices in the United States is advanced in support of this opinion, on the ground that beef prices would have risen in sympathy, even had there been no duty. It is also stated that, had there been no duty, probable imports of beef could have affected domestic prices but slightly. It must be remembered, however, that the world market was glutted with beef during much of the time after the middle of 1921, prices were ruinously low, and for a time refrigerated steamers had to be held at British ports because there was no room in the "cold stores" ashore for their cargoes. Free entry for foreign beef would have been a godsend to exporting countries. In view of what happened in 1913, when there was no depression in these exporting countries, it seems idle to claim that heavy imports into the United States would not have occurred in the absence of a duty after the middle of 1921.

Another point made is that it would be difficult to divert to American ports sufficient refrigerated tonnage to transport appreciable quantities of beef. There is, however, one British line on the New York-Buenos Aires run that is able to land not less than 150,000,000 pounds of chilled beef in New York per year. Its tonnage could be easily expanded. It is not affected by the "freight pool" over which the author is concerned.

Uneasiness is expressed over statements as to understandings, etc., between beef-exporters, and it is said that official inquiries of the British and American governments have convinced them that this freight pool—i. e., allocation of refrigerated tonnage in order to avoid periodic gluts of chilled beef—results in a restraint of competition. But the last two British reports incline to the belief that the pool really is in the interest of British consumers. The report of the Federal Trade Commission has been virtually repudiated by the State Department.

Speculations as to the attitude toward importations of American meat-packers operating in foreign countries seem ineffectual. If these packers did not import under free entry, their competitors would do so. The American packers could not maintain a philanthropic attitude toward American cattlemen, and remain in business, in the face of the competition which they have to meet.

Mr. Edminster discusses the future efficacy of the duties on cattle and beef. The statement is made that, "in so far as consumers undertake to escape the burden of higher prices by resorting to substitutes, the duties on cattle and beef will have the effect of diminishing the consumption rather than of raising the price." There is an element of contradiction in this, however, since it is obvious that, if the price were not raised, there would be no pressure for diminution of consumption.

A discussion of "real" cattle prices from 1878 to 1925 shows a sharp upward trend until 1915, cattle numbers tending downward after the early nineties. The logical conclusion is drawn that marginal costs moved upward with prices. The argument with respect to the apparent decline in beef production is, however, inconclusive. Between 1878 and 1914 the average age at which beef cattle were slaughtered declined by about fifteen months. There was a gain in number of beef cows, and doubtless also in young steers. Actual beef production appears to have reached its peak about 1906 or 1907, declined for a time, and in 1923-25 averaged 7,028,000,000 pounds, as compared with 6,959,000,000 in the years 1907-09. The production during the past three years may have been increased slightly as a result of some degree of liquidation, but there was also some liquidation during a series of years centering on 1907. A permanent decline in beef production between 1907 and 1925 cannot be proved.

It must be noted, moreover, that real prices for cattle have tended downward since 1915. In view of an advance in technique of cattle production since 1915, and particularly since 1920, when there has been a sweeping movement toward a "cow and calf" basis in the Far West, it seems probable that marginal costs have recently declined in sympathy with the decline in real prices for cattle. This lays open to question the author's opinion that any further increase in domestic production must be predicated on higher prices and costs. The author's statement that the tariff cannot be made a very effective instrument for increasing prices and stimulating production also is laid open to question by this and previously mentioned considerations.

In drawing his final conclusions, the author advances a new thought which is somewhat surprising—that, while cattle-breeders will benefit from the duties, cattle-feeders will not. He overlooks an important consideration: If the duties will stimulate production, which he elsewhere asserts, then it might be argued that the world supply would be larger than if there were no duty, world prices therefore lowered below the level which would obtain if there were no duty, and the burden of the tariff on domestic consumers lessened in proportion. All the duties can do, if they are effective, is to raise domestic prices above the current world level.

The assertion that cattle-feeders will not benefit from the duties is contrary to observed effects of the tariff, and is inconsistent. On it is predicated the apparent opposition of interest between breeders and feeders. The price of fat cattle is determined primarily by that of beef, and closely follows the price of beef. The price of thin cattle is determined primarily by that of fat cattle, but may follow the latter less closely, mainly because of variations in feed costs. But the factors making for this less close relationship in the case of thin cattle are always present, tariff or no tariff, and are not discernibly affected by the presence or absence of duties on cattle and beef. If the tariff tends to raise domestic prices for fat cattle and beef, it would normally have a like effect on prices for thin cattle, and no greater effect on them than on fat cattle.

The author makes a further point against duties on cattle and beef on the ground that they will penalize the meat-packing industry, primarily through a reduction in volume of business. But the tariff to date has raised prices, volume of business has increased, and there are few indications of a decline. The normal growth of population promises to maintain volume of business, even though per-capita consumption may possibly decrease.

"In our study of live-stock marketing, and changing conditions in the live-stock and meat trade, we find most useful material in THE PRODUCER. It is, indeed, an excellent publication for anyone interested in keeping in touch with significant developments, and of interest to all concerned in the trade."—PAUL L. MILLER, Agricultural Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa.

NEBRASKA FEEDING EXPERIMENTS

BY JAMES E. POOLE

NEBRASKA'S 145-day calf-feeding experiment, from November 23, 1926, to April 17, 1927, attracted fully a thousand people to the Agricultural College at Lincoln on April 22. In addition to the feeding demonstration by H. J. Gramlich, in charge of the experiment, an interesting program was rendered, embracing a general discussion of current trade problems, in which William J. Loeffel and A. D. Weber, of the Animal Husbandry Department; Professor Jay L. Lush, of the Texas Experiment Station; Bruce McCullough, of the *Omaha Daily Journal-Stockman;* J. E. Poole, market editor of THE PRODUCER, and William Diesing, vice-president of the Cudahy Packing Company, participated.

In the experiment, Shockley calves were used. This is one of the best commercial herds in Nebraska, and the little cattle made a splendid demonstration of efficiency in the feed-lot. The demonstration was made by Professor Gramlich, in charge of animal-husbandry work at Lincoln, and was convincing. The significant fact of the demonstration was that the 100 head of calves used in the experiment made an average gain of 348 pounds in 145 days, or practically 2½ pounds per day, at an average cost of $8.22 per cwt. for the gain. As this result is in line with previous tests at the station, any further controversy would appear to be superfluous. The entire bunch of cattle was appraised by Omaha market experts at $10.35 per cwt. in the feed-lot, and, as only $8.63 was necessary to break even, the profit on the operation is obvious.

An age experiment carried on for the past five years at the Nebraska station by Professor Gramlich gives averages over that period which are reasonably conclusive. Between two-year-old, yearling, and steer calves there has been little difference in average daily gains—2.19, 2.17, and 2.15 pounds, respectively; but the feed needed to put on 100 pounds of gain is substantially less in the case of calves, and greatest in two-year-olds. In the case of two-year-olds, 817 pounds of shelled corn and 294 pounds of alfalfa hay were consumed in making 100 pounds of gain; yearling steers required 707 pounds of corn and 292 pounds of hay; while in the case of calves only 518 pounds of corn and 227 pounds of hay were used. Stated in terms of pounds of gain made per bushel of corn consumed, two-year-olds made 6.8 pounds, yearlings 8 pounds, and calves 11.2 pounds.

An interesting phase of this year's experiment concerned wintering stock calves at Valentine. The cattle were divided into four lots for the test. At the end of 120 days the lot fed native wild hay showed a gain of 112.5 pounds per head; the lot fed the same hay, plus 1 pound of cottonseed cake per head daily, gained 134.4 pounds; and the lot fed 1½ pounds of cottonseed cake, 153.4 pounds. The fourth lot, fed mixed hay, including alsike and mixed clover, made 108.5 pounds. The significance of this trial is that western cattle-raisers without leguminous hay, such as alfalfa or clover, should use a protein supplement, such as cottonseed cake. Western calves rarely hold their fall weight or condition during the winter, which is an economic loss that can be ill afforded at current values.

In this experiment, steers outgained heifers where direct comparisons were made. On a corn and alfalfa ration, steers gained 23 pounds more than heifers; on a corn, cottonseed cake, and alfalfa ration, steers outgained heifers by 20 pounds per head. This concurs with results of previous trials. Although heifers made less gain, they carried a higher finish than steers. As daily feed consumption was practically the same, cost of making 100 pounds of gain was greater with heifers than with steers, at the expense of profit.

Calves fed cottonseed cake showed greater gain by 17 pounds per head than otherwise, and graded higher at the close of the test. Cost of gain where cottonseed was used was greater, however.

One part cottonseed to each six parts of corn in the heifer ration increased the gain 18 pounds per head—a more expensive gain, but making a higher finish.

COLOR OF GRASS-FED BEEF

TO WHAT EXTENT is the belief that beef from grass-fattened animals is objectionably dark in color based on fact? For some time past the National Live Stock and Meat Board, in co-operation with agricultural experiment stations, has been conducting tests to determine the influence of feed on color and palatability—finding it, we believe, a somewhat knotty problem. When the Purnell Act was passed by Congress last year, funds became available for more research work along this line. In Kansas, the Department of Animal Husbandry of the State Agricultural College took advantage of the opportunity to try to establish some definite data bearing on this subject. At the convention of the Kansas Live Stock Association in Wichita in February, Dr. C. W. McCampbell, of the college, told of the results so far reached.

A thousand head of well-bred four-year-old steers from the Panhandle of Texas had been grazed during the summer of 1926 on bluestem grass near Manhattan, said Dr. McCampbell. Seven carloads of this lot were marketed, some of them going to feeders and some to killers. Those that were slaughtered were followed through the coolers by a representative of the college, who checked the color of the meat.

One carload was bought by the college and divided into three groups. Group I was continued on bluestem grass, without other feed. Group II was fed corn on bluestem grass. Group III was fed cottonseed cake on bluestem grass. All three groups were thereupon killed in the college slaughterhouse, and the color of the meat carefully noted.

Two facts were demonstrated by these experiments: first, the darkest-colored carcass from the group fattened on grass alone was not objectionably dark; second, the color of the beef, both lean and fat, from animals fed exclusively on grass was almost exactly the same as that of beef from the lots fed combinations of grass with corn or cottonseed cake. These latter rations, however, besides increasing the gains, had the effect of making the fat somewhat firmer.

Chemical analyses and cooking tests were then made of samples from each group. These tests proved the meat from steers fattened on straight grass to be "wholesome, nutritious, moderately tender, of good flavor, and fairly juicy." The only perceptible difference between the various lots was that "the meat from the steers short-fed on grass was slightly less dry than the meat from the straight grass-fattened steers."

From these tests Dr. McCampbell draws the not unnatural conclusion that "there could have been no serious objection to the color of the beef from cattle fattened on Kansas bluestem grass during the summer of 1926." How far the dry weather of last season tended to influence the result is considered problematical. The necessity for further study is admitted, and the Kansas Agricultural College intends to continue the investigations, "with the hope of establishing definitely the color of grass-fat beef, the factors that determine its color, and, if possible, how these factors may be controlled, or at least influenced, in the best interests of the producer of grass-fattened beef."

Incidentally, the extent to which the public has come to discriminate against cuts from big steers was clearly brought

out. To help defray the expenses of the study, efforts were made to sell half of each carcass. While no difficulty was met with in disposing of the meat from an 800-pound heifer of inferior quality, but carrying the same amount of fat as the test animals, it was almost impossible to sell, at either wholesale or retail, the product of these good 1,200-pound steers, whether grass-fattened or short-fed. Rib roasts from the steers weighed from six to nine pounds, whereas the average consumer wants a three- or four-pound roast. This fact causes Dr. McCampbell to reflect that "the matter of size of cuts of grass-fattened aged steers is a much more serious handicap to the sale of this class of beef than any other."

MONTANA MEETS AT MILES CITY

APRIL 7 AND 8 were the dates of the forty-second annual convention of the Montana Stock Growers' Association, and Miles City was the place. The gathering was perhaps the most successful in the history of the organization. The largest crowd ever recorded was in attendance, and a marked spirit of optimism was manifest throughout the meeting.

President Charles M. Dowlin in his annual address told of the things which the association had endeavored to accomplish during the past year. He was followed by Secretary E. A. Phillips, who presented his financial report. Among the other speakers were: Governor J. E. Erickson; Charles Donnelly, president of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, St. Paul; James E. Poole, market editor of THE PRODUCER, who painted the live-stock outlook as exceptionally promising; Dr. W. J. Butler, state veterinarian of Montana; Judge C. H. Loud, of Miles City; B. H. Heide, secretary of the International Live Stock Exposition, Chicago; C. H. Williams, president of the Montana Wool Growers' Association, who spoke on "Montana and Its Possibilities;" W. J. Paul, of Deer Lodge, whose subject was "Cattle Trails;" C. L. Mosher, of the federal reserve bank, Minneapolis, who gave an address on "Credit and Transportation;" and H. R. Davison, representing the Institute of American Meat Packers, who dealt with "Co-operation Between Packers and Stockmen."

The resolutions adopted had the following purport:

Favoring federal legislation providing for leasing of public domain to stockmen for long terms and at reasonable rentals;

Advocating legislation permitting purchase of 640 acres or more as isolated tracts, and elimination of requirement of ownership by applicant of contiguous property;

Demanding import duty of six cents a pound on green and fifteen cents a pound on dry hides;

Opposing any reduction in present tariff on cattle and sheep, and requesting President to increase such tariff by 50 per cent;

Recommending increase in tariff on beef and mutton;

Indorsing Kendrick amendments to Packers and Stock-Yards Act;

Requesting that American army and navy be supplied at all times with American-grown beef;

Urging Department of Agriculture vigorously to prosecute work for control of insect pests;

Indorsing proposal of Biological Survey for investigation of feeding habits of large game animals in relation to live-stock grazing, and opposing creation of new game preserves;

Asking Bureau of Agricultural Economics to disseminate information with regard to shipments of live stock to market as far in advance as possible;

Indorsing unqualifiedly Great Lakes-Atlantic Ocean waterway project;

Approving "truth-in-meats" program, and requesting that grading of meat be made on basis which will give equal recognition to western grass-fed cattle;

Believing that benefits of Federal Intermediate Credit Act could be greatly extended by permitting individuals and corporations to borrow direct;

Commending activities of National Live Stock and Meat Board;

Condemning legislation tending to restrict marketing of fats from beef cattle through imposition of heavy license on dealers in oleomargarine;

Praising Boys' and Girls' Club activities;

Indorsing THE PRODUCER and urging members to subscribe for it;

Approving bill before Congress for organization of co-operative stock-raising association southeast of Miles City, under supervision of Forest Service;

Commending work done at United States Range Experiment Station at Fort Keogh in production of full-blooded stock;

Requesting president of association to appoint committee of three members to confer with congressional committee during coming summer on establishment of special grazing district;

Approving action of Secretary of Agriculture in prohibiting entry into United States of meat products from countries where infectious live-stock diseases exist;

Complimenting railroads of Northwest for efficient service given during past year.

The present officers were unanimously re-elected, as follows: Charles M. Dowlin, of Forsyth, president; George C. Clemow, of Jackson, first vice-president; Julian Terrett, of Brandenberg, second vice-president; E. A. Phillips, of Helena, secretary. It was voted to hold next year's meeting at Havre.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON MONTANA CONVENTION

BY JAMES E. POOLE

MONTANA faces a rehabilitation task. Its cattle industry has gone on a local-production basis. A few thousand southern stockers will be absorbed this spring, but the old order has passed forever. The inexorable law of recurrence is working, and the breeding herd is playing a return engagement. Montana is working to a cow, calf, and yearling basis. Outside a winter-feeding industry of modest volume, but promising expansion, the principal function of the bovine herds of that state hereafter will be replenishment of eastern feed-lots and pastures.

Interest in live stock is more than latent—it is decidedly active. The new scale of prices has had a confidence-inspiring influence. Cattle have wintered well, with the possible exception of a few localities in the north, and the grazing season is starting under somewhat propitious conditions. The great eastern plain—once the maturing-ground of millions of southern-bred stockers—was practically depleted of bovine life by the dry-farming orgy and the drought last summer, necessitating a clean-up. This region must be restocked—obviously a tedious process. Just how it will be accomplished is an unsolved economic problem. Nevertheless, the campaign is on. Grazing land is acquiring tangible value. While the convention of the Montana Stock Growers' Association was in progress at Miles City in April, announcement was made that a Wisconsin syndicate had acquired the John M. Hold ranch property, embracing 80,000-odd acres on the Tongue River—an acquisition that means early restocking. Montana will load fewer cattle than in 1926, but it is by no means out of the business. On the Crow and other reservations, grass is carrying its full capacity. Behind the fences, where the cattleman is protected, he is still doing business; but the halcyon open-range days are gone, never to return. In its very nature, it was a temporary condition.

This year's meeting at Miles City was a veritable home-coming. It was the forty-second gathering of the Montana cattle clans. Some reminiscing was indulged in, but the practical phases of the industry were in the foreground. Curtis Mosher sounded a note of optimism when he said:

"When one remembers that in 1920 the Montana live-stock industry suffered an even heavier blow than was visited upon agriculture, it is a satisfaction to know that in 1926 it had so far recovered its former prestige that its sales exceeded the total sales of farm crops in this state. Your statistical experts place live-stock sales, excluding $10,000,000 worth of milk and dairy products, at $61,462,000, or a figure greater than the revenue from farm crops by a comfortable margin of more than $3,000,000. Cattle showed a larger return to the stockman, and the income from sheep and lambs was substantially increased. There is equal satisfaction in knowing that back of this favorable record there is the fact that during 1926 the stock industry enjoyed ample credit at reasonable rates, and perfect transportation service."

President Dowlin presented figures crediting Montana's live-stock industry with a gross income of $71,490,000 in 1926 —slightly in excess of returns from mining and about $13,-000,000 in excess of farming returns. His annual report was optimistic in tone. The historian of the occasion was Judge C. H. Loud, of Miles City, who traced the live-stock industry of the state from its beginning in the early eighties, through the trail period, down to the present time. Montana's cattle industry had its inception in the necessities of a freighter forced to turn his cattle loose in the fall of 1880, never expecting to see them again, but who, to his surprise, found next spring that only a small percentage had succumbed. As the Sandhill section of Nebraska became fully stocked with migratory Texas cattle, the overflow spread north until it had occupied the entire area of the northern plains region. This was one version, Judge Loud said; the other being that extinction of the buffalo made possible importation of southern cattle, the first drove being turned loose on the Tongue River in 1880, under such unfavorable conditions that the majority succumbed during the following severe winter. This demonstrated that bringing up southern cattle in the fall was impracticable. Thereafter they were moved to green grass early in the season, thus becoming acclimated before winter set in.

In 1882 and 1883 large herds of Oregon, Nevada, and Texas cattle were driven into Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas, a scramble for locations resulting, until, by 1885, it was found that the country was fully stocked, if not actually overstocked. Importation of eastern "dogie" cattle from Wisconsin and Minnesota about this time was a blunder, resulting in enormous, and in many localities total, mortality during the severe winter of 1886. The eastern Montana association was organized in 1883 at Miles City by Colonel T. J. Bryan, Joseph Scott, E. S. Newman, Judge Strevell, Captain C. C. Howes, J. J. Tomlinson, and Frank C. Robertson. The western association was effected about the same time, the two being consolidated on April 3, 1885, as the Montana Stock Growers' Association, the annual meetings being held at Miles City for many years.

President C. H. Williams, of the Montana Wool Growers' Association, made one of the keynote addresses of the event, in which he attacked federal forest-reserve management. His attack was not on conservation, but on what he termed the extravagant management of the system, at the expense of the state. He asserted that the forest-reserve areas of Montana could be administered to earn millions annually for the support of the state schools. Under federal-administration management, at present they are earning about $600,000 gross revenue annually, of which the net income is only $232,000. As a sop to appease local protest, $58,000 had been given the state for school purposes. He asserted that Secretary Jardine recognized the injustice of this, but was restrained from furnishing relief by powerful eastern interests dominating the situation.

Williams expressed the opinion that there would be no serious objection to doubling existing grazing fees if the money went into the state treasury, but the people of Montana were opposed to the new rates, beginning with an increase of $100,000 in 1928 and increasing annually for fourteen years, without adequate recompense to the state. Said Williams:

"The New England conception of the West has ever been wrong. Daniel Webster looked on the land now forming the magnificent empire beyond the Mississippi as fit only for jackals; but earlier Jefferson had sent Lewis and Clark to the Louisiana Purchase territory to investigate, and they bore back a tale of the greatness of the resources of the Rocky Mountain regions that Webster ignored, while John C. Fremont and his Mormon brigade given him by Brigham Young, ignoring Webster's sneer, drove out the Mexicans and saved the great Southwest to the nation. But while the West was driving the Mexicans out the front door, the Forest Service was allowed to sneak in at the back.

"The trouble out here is that 80 per cent of the people, not being in direct touch with the matter, do not care about the federal possession of the forests. There should be no such thing as government ownership within a state. Wyoming has taken that stand, and its legislature passed a memorial to its congressmen, asking the return to it of the appropriated forests. Montana might not go so far, but it should try to get some revenue for the schools from them."

Wallis Huidekoper injected the sentimental phase of the gathering. He spoke of the old days along the river when the association was at its birth, conjuring up the visions of the old camp, the water-hole, the varicolored remuda, the cook, and the bunch of bow-legged cowboys sitting around with their tin plates on their laps and their coffee cups at their sides.

A WORLD WHEAT POOL

EARLY IN THIS MONTH of May a meeting of wheat-growers' representatives from the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, South Africa, and other surplus-producing countries is scheduled to be held at Kansas City for the purpose of looking into the possibility of forming an international wheat pool.

If we remember aright, a movement with a similar ambitious objective was attempted a few years ago, but came to naught. Possibly the unfortunate outcome of some of the pooling ventures in this country meanwhile discouraged the sponsors of the project. In view, however, of the great success which has attended the development of pooling and marketing organizations among the wheat-farmers of Canada, it has been suggested that the efforts be renewed.

THE CALENDAR

May 19-20, 1927—Annual Convention of Cattle and Horse Raisers' Association of Oregon, Prineville, Ore.

June 3-4, 1927—Annual Convention of Nebraska Stock Growers' Association, Alliance, Neb.

June 7-8, 1927—Annual Convention of Wyoming Stock Growers' Association, Casper, Wyo.

June 10-11, 1927—Annual Convention of Western South Dakota Stock Growers' Association, Rapid City, S. D.

June 20-23, 1927—Annual Convention of National Association of Retail Grocers, Omaha, Neb.

July 2, 1927—Midsummer Meeting of Colorado Stock Growers' Association, Meeker, Colo.

July 11-16, 1927—Exhibition and Stampede, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

July 19-21, 1927—Annual Convention of Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association of Texas, Kerrville, Tex.

September 26-October 2, 1927—Annual Dairy Cattle Congress, Waterloo, Iowa.

October 29-November 5, 1927—Pacific International Live Stock Exposition, Portland, Ore.

November 26-December 3, 1927—International Live Stock Exposition, Chicago, Ill.

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GENERAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

WEATHER, TRADE, AND INDUSTRY were very spotted during April. The flood situation in the Mississippi Valley is improving, but its full effect on industrial and agricultural production can not as yet be measured.

Wholesale trade generally has not made up the decrease from a year ago reported in earlier months. Retail trade is still on a cautious, hand-to-mouth basis.

Volume of iron and steel buying fell off last month, and there was a reduction in output, with some concessions in prices. Non-ferrous metals are easier. Building conditions vary, with some activity in the central West, but less in other sections, and a threatened tie-up in New York growing out of plumbers' demand for higher wages. Overproduction is evident in the petroleum industry, with weak demand for crude and lower prices for refined, especially gasoline, as well as reduced sales of oil supplies. Gasoline stocks are unusually heavy, and are increasing. Car-loadings are slightly less than a year ago, largely on account of the coal strike and flood conditions.

Cotton prices gained during April, and there is marked activity in cotton goods. Domestic consumption of cotton in March set a new high monthly record, and our exports for the past seven months have been averaging more than one million bales per month—much above the ordinary volume. Raw-wool prices are rather slack, and there is considerable weakness in wool, with output hardly up to two-thirds of capacity. Manufacture of silk goods has decreased.

Hide prices are much stronger, with larger trading. Leather markets and leather goods are firm, with an advancing tendency—an exception to the general commodity price trend.

Crops are a little late, and in spots the growth of winter wheat is rank. A big area of cotton land will not be planted, on account of the flood. Grain prices were slightly lower during April, but firmed up sharply at the beginning of May and closed higher than a month ago. Visible stocks of grain are decreasing rapidly.

There was a severe decline in the stock market in April, the reaction being the most extensive of the year and affecting all groups—rails, industrials, and miscellaneous. Some railroad shares and industrials regained a large part of the decline and closed the month strong. The stock market has enjoyed an unusual boom for many months, and some reduction in prices as well as in speculative activity is freely predicted. Bonds are irregularly lower. Money is easier. Foreign exchange is generally steady.

Bradstreet's index number, based on the wholesale prices per pound of thirty-one articles used for food, for the week ending April 28 was $3.35, compared with $3.41 for the previous week and $3.48 for the corresponding week in 1926.

THE WAR ON MARGARINE

PRODUCTION OF OLEOMARGARINE in the United States in 1924 was 239,699,000 pounds, or approximately 2.1 pounds per capita. Of butter, in factories and on farms, in the same year we produced 1,998,883,000 pounds, and we had an import excess of 11,148,000 pounds, making a total of 2,010,031,000 pounds, or about 17.9 pounds per capita. Whereas the manufacture of butter has been constantly rising, that of oleomargarine for the last four years has been practically stationary.

In the face of these figures, the dairy interests, imagining their citadel threatened, are yearly beseeching our lawmaking bodies, national and state, for new protective measures. A compliant Congress has taxed colored margarine entering into interstate commerce 10 cents a pound, and the uncolored product one-fourth of a cent per pound, while manufacturers have to pay a federal license fee of $600 a year, wholesale dealers $480, and retailers $48. Not content with this, individual states have imposed further taxation and restrictions. Many absolutely forbid the manufacture and sale of colored margarine, some put a similar embargo on the uncolored product, while in still others the end is attained through a system of prohibitive fees and taxes. The absurd lengths to which this form of class legislation has gone are illustrated by the fact, as cited by Armour's *Letter to Animal Husbandmen*, that, while the law in one state

requires margarine to be labeled "a substitute for butter," a neighboring state has a law expressly forbidding such label—both regulations, we presume, equally in the interest of "the public health."

It is pertinent, then, to inquire as to the constituents of this article against which such unremitting warfare is waged. Is it composed of materials unwholesome in themselves, or such as are grown stale and have to be worked over before being fit for use? Margarine, as manufactured in this country, is a combination of milk with two or more of the finest edible fats, of which animal fats average about 37 per cent and vegetable oils 63 per cent. In what is called "animal margarine" the proportions are 80 and 20 per cent, respectively. Fats, in their pure state, having no flavor of their own, ripened, pasteurized milk, and salt, are added to render the desirable taste. This product is manufactured under the strictest sanitary precautions, is palatable and admittedly nutritious, is 95 per cent digestible, and—"ah, there's the rub!" —can be sold at a much lower figure than butter, and thus appeals to the housewife of limited means.

One would have supposed that the inventor of this addition to humanity's diet of a splendid and low-priced product would have been hailed as a public benefactor "The right to procure healthy and nutritious food, by which life may be preserved and enjoyed, and to manufacture it, is among those inalienable rights which, in my judgment, no state can give, and no state can take away except in punishment for crime," wisely observed Associate Justice Field, of the United States Supreme Court, in an opinion rendered a few years ago in a suit brought by margarine manufacturers to test the principle of one of the laws enacted against them. The obviousness of this statement would seem self-evident. It is one thing to preserve domestic industries from the effects of ruinous foreign competition. For this purpose our dairy people now have an import duty of 12 cents on every pound of foreign butter brought into the United States. It is quite a different thing to try to legislate out of existence the maker of a home-produced article against which no other tenable objection can be raised than that it interferes with the sale of a certain other article. Let us have free and open competition, on even terms, on the basis of merit and price, with no favorites, with all the cards on the table, and let the consumer then decide for himself. There are enough people who know the facts—and there are also enough people who naturally prefer butter to margarine—to make it unwise, as well as utterly unnecessary, to resort to a policy of misrepresentation and unprovable innuendo.

Most of the ingredients entering into the manufacture of margarine come from the farm. It is thus not a case of the farmer against the manufacturer, but of one class of manufacturers against another, as Armour's Live Stock Bureau points out. The livestock man does not wish in any way to hamper the legitimate activities of the dairy farmer or anyone else. In return he demands an open and unrestricted market for his lard and his tallow, with freedom from the unfair attacks against which he too often in the past has had to defend himself.

THE BELATED SHEEP RETURNS

AT LAST we know how many sheep we had on January 1, 1925. The returns, released on April 18, 1927—more than twenty-seven months after the census was taken—give the total number as 35,590,159. This is an increase of 1.7 per cent over 1920, when 35,033,516 tails were counted.

It is interesting to note that the estimate of the Crop-Reporting Board of the Department of Agriculture, which could not wait for the census, found the number of sheep in the United States on January 1, 1925, to be 39,390,000. This estimate, based on reports by crop correspondents, field statisticians, and co-operating state boards, is thus 3,800,000 ahead of the actual number as given by the census, and has been used as a foundation for the guess of January 1, 1926, which was 40,748,000, and that of January 1, 1927, which was 41,909,000. Some adjustment seems to be necessary here.

The question may well be raised of what particular value a census is, the results of which do not become known until the figures are hopelessly out of date. In a matter that shifts so rapidly, under the influence of economic factors, as the numbers of live stock, it is obviously of the greatest importance, if stock-takings are to be worth anything at all, that the returns be promptly tabulated and published. We do not know where the fault lies for this absurd delay, and so do not blame anybody in particular. But clearly something has gone wrong somewhere that could easily have been avoided with a little foresight.

EXCESSIVE RETAILERS' MARGINS

A COUPLE OF MONTHS BACK we told of Henry Ford's venture into the retail meat trade. The "commissaries," as the shops were named, were originally established for the benefit of Ford employees, but soon, through borrowing of passes and other means, got to be patronized by outsiders to such an extent that eventually it was concluded that they might as well be opened to the public. The meat was sold practically at cost, plus running expenses, with the result that prices were cut to a point which attracted customers from all parts of the city of Detroit in ever-increasing numbers.

Protests then began to pour in. Retailers complained that their patronage was being drawn away, that they could not possibly meet the terms of Ford's competition, and that, unless his meat shops were again closed to the general populace, they would be forced out of business. To this Ford countered by offering a job in his plants to every retailer who had been compelled to quit. This, however, did not pacify the protestants. Appeals were broadcast over the country, and the retailers' organizations rallied to their support. They possessed one weapon which they relied upon to carry persuasion, and which they now threatened to bring into play: a nation-wide boycott of the Ford car.

The move proved effective. Against this argument Ford capitulated. He has agreed henceforth to close his meat markets to other than employees.

Two lessons seem to be taught by this episode. One is that present methods of distribution are woefully lacking in efficiency. A system built upon the multiplication beyond all reason of small retailers, each of whom includes among his legitimate expenses a "profit" on the owner principle, is necessarily both costly and wasteful. The public submits to being held up only because it presumably has no escape. Given a chance to buy at a reasonable figure, it stampedes, as the Ford experiment shows.

The other lesson is the power of organization. Whenever the club of united action can be brought to bear, it falls with infinitely more weight than sporadic personal cuffings. What the anger of individuals in Detroit failed to bring about was accomplished by the well-directed chorus of indignation from all parts of the country.

The problem of reform in our meat-retailing practices can not be solved from below. We can not organize the consumer. He has his grudge, but he depends upon others for relief. Nor will a few bookkeeping improvements turn the trick. The whole system is awry. As it appears to us, the only agency that has the organization and the means to enforce a radical change is the packers. A few packer-operated retail shops in each large community, conducted on the same principle as Henry Ford's, would draw the same crowds that swamped the Detroit "commissaries." And if the packers' organization got unitedly behind the venture, there would be little danger from retaliation on the part of the supernumeraries who might be hurt.

"THE PRODUCER is a good paper."—CHESTER PRICE, Tonasket, Wash.

"I appreciate very much having the opportunity to subscribe to a magazine of the character of THE PRODUCER. It certainly fulfills a need in our live-stock work."—H. HACKEDORN, State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash.

FLINT HILLS AND OSAGE PASTURES UNDERSTOCKED

A FINE OUTLOOK FOR GRASS, lower lease prices, and slow demand, with prospects of many vacant pastures, is the report from the Kansas bluestem region, as conditions appeared to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics at the middle of last month. Up to April 1 it was estimated that only 67 per cent of all available pastures had been leased, as against 79 per cent last year and 81 per cent in 1925. Unless there is an abrupt change in the situation in Texas, where feed conditions this spring are exceptionally good, it seems that many Flint Hills pastures are destined to lie idle this season. Lease prices this year average about 50 cents per head lower than last year. Aged steers and cows have been contracted at from $6 to $10 per head, with the average at about $8.10.

Only about 70 per cent of the Osage pastures in Oklahoma had been leased on April 1, compared with 86 per cent a year ago and 87 per cent in 1925. These pastures are reported to be a little late, but moisture is ample, and the grass has made a good start. Lease prices are from 40 to 60 cents lower than last year, with aged steers and cows being taken at an average of $6.25 a head, and young cattle at $4.50.

PRICES ON PURE-BREDS RISE

HIGHER PRICES for pure-bred cattle were realized by individual breeders in 1926 than in any of the three preceding years, according to the Department of Agriculture. Of the 29,335 such cattle of the beef breeds reported sold last year, 15,739 were Herefords, 10,181 Shorthorns, 2,824 Aberdeen-Angus, and 591 Red Polled. Percentages of the different price ranges on these cattle were as below:

	Below $50	$50 to $250	$250 and Above
1926	11.9	86.6	1.5
1925	25.2	73.1	1.7
1924	21.7	76.2	2.1
1923	16.4	77.9	5.7

Of a total of 21,137 pure-bred dairy cattle sold in 1926, 10,950 were Holsteins, 5,142 Jerseys, 3,086 Guernseys, 1,689 Ayrshires, and 270 Brown Swiss. Prices ranged as follows (per cent of sales):

	Below $50	$50 to $250	$250 and Above
1926	8.4	83.0	8.6
1925	21.0	69.8	9.2
1924	22.3	68.7	9.0
1923	11.4	65.0	23.6

FARM POPULATION CONTINUES TO DECREASE

ESTIMATES made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics indicate that the farm population of the United States decreased by 649,000 persons last year, or 2.3 per cent. This is the largest decrease in any year since 1920. In 1925 our farm population was reduced 1.5 per cent. The total number of persons living on farms January 1, 1927, is given as 27,892,000, against 28,541,000 on January 1, 1926. The 1925 agricultural census figure, 28,982,000, was used as a base for the bureau's calculations.

It is estimated that 2,155,000 persons moved from farms to cities, towns, and villages last year, and that 1,135,000 moved to farms, making a net movement of 1,020,000 away from the farms. Births on farms during 1926 are estimated at 658,000, and deaths at 287,000, leaving a natural increase of 371,000 persons, which reduced the loss due to the cityward movement to 649,000. All sections of the country show decreases for the year.

THE STOCKMEN'S EXCHANGE

TEXAS SHEEP NOTES

SAN ANGELO, TEX., April 19, 1927.

TO THE PRODUCER:

The biggest threat to the sheep industry in southwest Texas today—the stomach-worm—is to be met with stern measures of quarantine, or some other equally effective method of control. This disease, which seems to be an accessory to the excellent range conditions which have obtained during the last two years, when there have been all kinds of vegetation of the luxuriant sort, cut a pretty wide swath last year.

It is in an effort to prevent its spreading and to stamp it out that the measures are to be taken by the Texas Live Stock Sanitary Commission. The sheep scab will be under control by January 1, 1928, it is planned, and it is thought that the stomach-worm can be mastered just as easily. The stomach-worm has not affected the whole country, but only a small portion of it.

Lambs have been contracted at a rather rapid rate during the last few days, at 10½ cents for mixed and 10 cents for mutton lambs. There have not been many twins this year, but the losses from cold have been few. Some February lambs on April 15 were weighing fifty pounds or more.

The fencing movement, which has resulted in the placing of hundreds of miles under the wolf-proof fence, now has 85 per cent of the sheep lands in the Southwest so inclosed, and a better grade of wool is resulting, while the labor problem is being met. Lambing is now done in the open, without the use of a large number of Mexican helpers—one-third as many, in fact, handling the work.

About 30,000 yearling ewes went out of this area in April, and about the same number of yearling muttons.

SAM ASHBURN.

SPRING LATE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

CEDARVILLE, CAL., April 30, 1927.

TO THE PRODUCER:

Cattle have wintered well, with the hay pretty well fed up on account of an unusually late spring. The grass has been slow in starting. Cattle are going on the reserve May 1, which is fifteen days later than for several years past. We are rather unfortunate here in not having any early spring range, and the cattle, being kept on the ranches so long, injure the coming hay crop to a very considerable extent.

There seems to be general complaint about the arbitrary rules under which grazing is permitted on the national forest. The forest supervisors all seem to be of about the same opinion concerning the protection of grasses, etc. We all believe in conservation, but sometimes it is carried to such an extreme that the cattleman can not afford to keep the cattle on his ranch, which only tends further to force him out of business.

While prospects now look somewhat better, the cattleman still lacks a lot in being able to sell a good two-year-old steer for what it has cost to produce in this locality. Cattle have diminished in numbers probably 50 per cent in the last eight years or so. A good grade of cattle is grown here, but if there is ever any profit to be made in the cattle business, it will be made with the very best types available, that will mature at an early age—say, from fifteen to twenty months. I have a small herd of pure-bred Aberdeen-Angus cattle—the first in this section of the country—and, from all information I have been able to get, I can not but believe that they are the earliest-maturing beef type we have.

Sheep have wintered very well, after having gone into the winter in rather bad condition from the result of a very dry season late in 1926. They are in the midst of the lambing season on the ranges, some having had losses about the middle of April and earlier; but the last ten days have been favorable, and feed is starting well. Early lambs on the ranches have been well up to the 100 per cent mark, and I would now estimate that the range ewes will mark up to around 85 per cent. Our wool was practically all sold some two months ago, at 29 cents f. o. b. cars. Most of the forest-reserve and some outside lambs have now been contracted at prices running from $7 to $7.50. Other sales have been at around 10 cents a pound. Sheep go on the reserve on July 1. Outside feed promises to be good, and a fine crop of lambs is promised for the August and September deliveries.

F. E. BUSH.

SPIRITS RISING IN ARIZONA

DOUGLAS, ARIZ., April 8, 1927.

TO THE PRODUCER:

At last the cattle industry seems to be on the up-grade. Present prices are good, ranging up to as high as $40 a head for the better grade of steers. As far as I know, nearly everything is sold up in this neighborhood.

We have had a good, open winter, followed by a fair spring. Live stock should go into the summer rainy season in good condition. Stockmen generally are feeling more optimistic than they have for several years.

F. P. MOORE.

NORTHERN ARIZONA HAS FAVORABLE SPRING

SIMMONS, ARIZ., April 22, 1927.

TO THE PRODUCER:

This has been one of the best springs that we have had in northern Arizona for many years, and stock in general looks good. Prices have come back to where a cowman can smile once more and see something to work for.

T. G. WALTER.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING

BEEF-LABELING MAKES START

STAMPING of the two top grades of beef—prime and choice—under government supervision, was formally inaugurated on May 1 at the nine cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Omaha, and Sioux City. Requests for the service have besides been received from St. Louis, Cleveland, and St. Paul, but funds are at present not available for extending it to those points. If, through this trial, the practicability of the scheme is proved, and the consumer demand warrants it, it is planned later to broaden the work to include other grades of beef, as well as possibly other meats.

Under the new marking system, the two grades of beef with which the experiment is being made must have the approval of the government's representative before the stamp is applied. Carcasses are to be marked with a roller stamp from one end to the other, so that most retail cuts will bear the label. The legends will read: "U. S. Prime Steer," "U. S. Prime Heifer," "U. S. Choice Steer," and "U. S. Choice Heifer."

By agreement between all the factors interested, the work has been placed under the direction of the National Live Stock and Meat Board, of which D. A. Millett is chairman and R. C. Pollock general manager. The services of A. T. Edinger, of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, have been secured to develop the program and establish contact with retailers. Funds will be provided by the Better Beef Association, headed by Oakleigh Thorne, of Millbrook, New York.

EASTERN LIVE-STOCK RATE CASE

EARLY IN 1923 interior Iowa packers filed a complaint with the Interstate Commerce Commission, attacking the relationship between the rates on live stock and those on its products. The examiner who heard this case recommended, in October, 1924, a reduction of 10 cents per hundred pounds, or from 87 to 77 cents, in the basic rate on fresh meat from Chicago to New York, with a corresponding reduction from the Mississippi River and to other eastern differential points. On December 2, 1925, the commission rendered its decision, effective February 1, 1926, holding that the fresh-meat rate eastbound from Chicago should be reduced 8 cents instead of 10 cents, and that the existing rates on cured meats and hides from western packing points were reasonable and just. Under this decision, the rate on fresh meat was made 22½ cents per hundred pounds higher than on cattle. The commission expressly stated that it was not attempting to establish any relationship between live stock and meat.

In the spring of 1925 (after the recommendation of the examiner in the above case) the Chicago packers, eastern slaughterers, and the American National Live Stock Association filed complaints with the commission, alleging that the eastbound rates on live stock from Chicago and other western points to New York and the seaboard were unjust and unreasonable. The doctrine of the Hoch-Smith Resolution was invoked. Hearings were held in June, 1925. Examiner Stiles has just submitted his report, recommending a reduction in the rates on cattle and hogs, double-deck, Chicago to New York, from 56½ to 48½ cents per hundred pounds, with proportionate reductions from the Mississippi River, to all Trunk Line and New England territory, and within Central Freight Association territory. A mileage scale of live-stock rates is proposed for the Central Freight Association territory.

In this case the relationship between the rates on live stock and those on its products figured very prominently. In his comments in support of the proposed reduction the examiner said:

> "It is clear from the evidence that reductions in the rates assailed will increase the buying power of the eastern buyers in the western markets, thus increasing the movement of live stock to the East and stimulating competition in the western markets. There is a unanimity of opinion by the witnesses that competition is the life of the live-stock market, constituting a most important factor in the maintenance of good prices, and that falling prices immediately result from any lessening of the competition. Therefore, the prosperity of the live-stock farmer is very largely dependent upon the extent of the competition in the large western live-stock markets."

In the many cases in which it has participated, involving this relationship, the American National Live Stock Association has stood for a basis of rates that would permit the widest competition in the central markets between the local slaughterers and the buyers for eastern packing concerns. A maladjustment of these rates would obviously cripple the operations of either the western or the eastern slaughterers.

If the recommendations of the examiner are approved by

the commission, the spread between the rates on cattle and dressed beef—for example, from Chicago to New York—would be widened to 30½ cents, instead of the present difference of 22½ cents. This, in our judgment, is more nearly fair and just than the existing spread. In previous years, since 1887, this difference or spread has ranged from as high as 40 cents to as low as 1½ cents (the latter during rate wars). For the period 1890 to 1900 it was 17 cents, the cattle rate being 28 cents and the dressed-beef rate 45 cents per hundred pounds. After 1900 the difference ascended to a maximum of 33½ cents and went to a minimum of 12 cents.

After discussing traffic statistics, operating costs, etc., the examiner made the following pointed reference to the Hoch-Smith Resolution and the depression in the live-stock industry:

"Matters of the foregoing nature are not the only considerations entering into the determination of this case. The Hoch-Smith Resolution, approved January 30, 1925 (43 Stat. L. 801), declares it to be the true policy in rate-making to be pursued by this commission in adjusting freight rates that the conditions which at any given time prevail in our several industries should be considered, in so far as it is legally possible to do so, to the end that commodities may freely move. . . .

"The first question that arises in connection with the application of that resolution to this proceeding is whether or not there is still a depression in the live-stock industry. . . . The evidence of record shows that, due to the depression in the industry which came on in the late fall of 1920 and lasted for nearly five years, the live-stock industry was in a state which might well be described as one of prostration. The western and southwestern ranchmen suffered most severely. At the time of hearing there had been a return to normal prices; but it would require the continuance of normal prices for a number of years, or of phenomenally high prices for a shorter period, to again place the industry upon its feet."

The proposed new adjustment should do much to stimulate the competition for live stock on the various markets. The examiner recommends that no reparation be granted.

STOCK-YARD CHARGES AT SAN ANTONIO

ON NOVEMBER 5, 1926, the Union Stock Yards at San Antonio, Texas, filed with the Secretary of Agriculture a schedule of rates and charges for stock-yard services, to become effective November 17. This tariff, among other things, contained a provision for an additional charge of 12½ cents per head of cattle and calves resold, and of 6 cents for hogs, sheep, and goats. A number of market agencies and dealers in a formal complaint protested against this advance. No satisfaction being given by the Stock-Yard Company, a further complaint was filed with the secretary, demanding reparation of charges collected under the new tariff.

A hearing to determine whether the charges mentioned are unjust, unreasonable, and discriminatory, or otherwise unlawful, under the Packers and Stock-Yards Act, and whether reparation is to be awarded, has been called at San Antonio for May 2.

STOCKER AND FEEDER RATES

THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION has filed a complaint with the Interstate Commerce Commission, asking for the establishment on stockers and feeders of a rate 75 per cent of the rate on fat stock, in what is known as Central Freight Association and Trunk Line territory. In those sections of the East carriers have heretofore not made any difference between the rates on fat stock and on feeder animals, as is done in the West.

THE 1925 FARM CENSUS

A BUNCH OF STATISTICS from the agricultural census of January 1, 1925, were released last month. In the case of many items the figures show a downward trend from the returns of 1920, which is particularly noticeable in the reported value of farm implements and in general farm expenditures. The decrease of 2,633,000 in total farm population between 1920 and 1925 may to some extent be accounted for by a difference in the method of enumeration. In 1925 only persons actually living on farms were counted, whereas in 1920 such farm laborers as, while not living on farms, lived outside the limits of any incorporated place, were included. However, the marked falling-off undoubtedly reflects the general movement away from the country and its uncertainties which is world-wide in character, and which has been given added emphasis by the economic disturbances of the post-war readjustment period.

We have previously quoted, and commented upon, the returns for cattle and swine, given out last year, but repeat the figures here for completeness' sake, with the explanation that only animals found on farms and ranches are included. To arrive at the country's aggregate holdings of domestic animals, those kept in cities and towns should be added. In 1920, these, as reported by the census, numbered: horses, 1,705,611; mules, 378,250; cattle, 2,111,527; sheep, 450,042; swine, 2,638,389. Some of the census data follow:

	1925	1920
Horses	16,535,759	19,767,161
Mules	5,730,608	5,432,391
All cattle	61,571,752	66,639,556
Beef cattle	35,573,990	35,278,100
Dairy cattle	25,997,762	31,361,456
Swine	51,842,428	59,346,409
Sheep	35,590,159	35,033,516
Goats	3,370,218	3,458,925
Chickens	409,290,849	359,537,127
Number of farms	6,371,640	6,448,343
Farm population	28,981,693	31,614,269
White	24,474,812	26,313,654
Colored	4,506,881	5,300,615
Value of products sold co-operatively	$ 857,652,166	$ 721,983,639
Value of farm implements	2,691,703,629	3,594,772,928
Expended for feed	750,444,560	1,097,452,187
Expended for fertilizer	230,528,446	326,399,800
Expended for labor	864,982,384	1,098,604,590
Milk produced (gallons)	9,198,303,635	7,805,143,792
Butter made on farms (pounds)	642,803,267	707,666,492
Cream sold (gallons))	45,735,694	82,247,580
Butterfat sold (pounds)	1,061,062,363	532,244,072
Whole milk sold (gallons)	2,666,627,367	2,529,331,413
Wool (pounds)	227,105,177	228,795,354
Eggs (dozens)	1,913,245,129	1,654,044,932

FOREST ROAD FUND

AFTER CONFERENCES between the state highway commissions and representatives of the Bureau of Public Roads and the Forest Service, apportionments from the forest highway fund authorized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1927, have been approved for the construction and maintenance of roads in or adjacent to national forests in fourteen western states and Alaska.

The federal fund, to be supplemented by state quotas, is $4,500,000, and will be distributed thus: Alaska, $361,500; Arizona, $243,500; California, $575,000; Colorado, $312,000; Idaho, $462,500; Minnesota, $36,800; Montana, $361,000; Nebraska, $4,595; Nevada, $83,887; New Mexico, $186,000; Oregon, $533,000; South Dakota, $33,600; Utah, $164,600; Washington, $415,000; and Wyoming, $200,000.

THE MARKETS

LIVE-STOCK MARKET IN APRIL

BY JAMES E. POOLE

CHICAGO, ILL., May 2, 1927.

SIXTY THOUSAND FEWER CATTLE around the ten-market circle in April, compared with a year ago, tells its own story; and that shrinkage was entirely of heavy cattle—the kind selling at anywhere from $9 to $10 per cwt. at the corresponding period of 1926, but on a $12.50 to $13.50 basis this year. A few outstanding 1,400- to 1,600-pound bullocks at $13.75 to $14 are not to be seriously reckoned with. A year ago that kind was worth $10.25. There was no shortage of light beef at any time. In fact, a pronounced disposition on the part of feeders to unload prematurely held light cattle down to a relatively low basis, resulting in an unseasonably wide spread. Packers bought cheap light steers, lacking feeder quality, but with a beef-covering, as low as $8.50; that kind selling on about the same basis as a year ago, when they got few decent steers under $9, and did not pay above $9.75 for many. On this occasion the spread was wide—$8.50 to $14—a large share of the steer crop going over the scales at $9.50 to $12.50.

Scarcity of Weighty Cattle Forces up Price

This trading basis has elicited voluble and caustic criticism from feeders with light cattle. Why, they argue, should yearlings sell at a substantial discount, compared with heavy cattle, if popular demand centers on light beef? The answer is simple: Where one load of heavy bullocks has been available this year, killers had access to twenty a year ago. At that time the market was constantly saturated with heavy beef, which was almost unsalable, especially the rough and even plain type; this year scarcity has frequently been so emphatic that even an oxy carcass did not tarry long in the cooler. A veracious buyer asserted late in April that he had not seen twenty loads of choice heavy cattle on the Chicago market this year; and he did not exaggerate, the fact being that this season's crop of big steers was improvised, almost overnight, to meet an urgent demand, and on a beef basis had little resemblance to the highly finished long-fed production of a year ago. Under a critical grading scheme, little of the heavy beef sent into distributive channels from January to May would have been branded as choice; much of it was barely good.

All Descriptions Selling on Merit

A statement not open to successful contradiction is that the various types, grades, and weights of cattle have sold on their respective merits this year. At current high prices, buyers have been unusually discriminatory. It is true that values have occasionally worked out of line, in response to temporary scarcity or reasonable plenitude, as the case may have been. When killers could not get desirable heavy steers, they went to the rough and plain kind under stress of necessity—also under protest; rectifying the irregularity at the earliest opportunity when they had access to the necessary cattle. This has been responsible for a somewhat wabbly trade, with fluctuations of 50 cents to $1 per cwt. within a few hours. Occasionally the whole list got into top-heavy condition, which happened late in April; but at all times the undertone has been healthy, beef has moved into distributive channels with reasonable alacrity, and rarely has any sign of congestion been detected.

Light Yearlings in Upward Movement

This also applies to light and medium-weight cattle. Failing to satisfy their needs with steers weighing 1,300 pounds and up, killers have gone to the 1,100- to 1,200-pound kinds, buying them relatively higher than heavy cattle; but

the moment they got enough of the big ones, adjustment was prompt. Long yearlings have always been equal to a good performance—and that means anything around or above 1,050 pounds, with decent quality and finish; but with respect to the great mass of light and half-fat so-called yearlings it was a mean market most of the time until the last week in April, when the whole yearling deal came to life in seasonal manner, materially improving the prospect for the spring and summer season.

Price of Heavies Determines Market Trend

Criticism of the market performance of heavy cattle is unwarranted. Based on cost of maturing and finishing, a heavy bullock is worth more intrinsically than a light one. The only reason for abnormal conditions in 1926 was a surplus of big cattle, and, this having been remedied, the market has gone back to its usual basis. Experience demonstrates that, whenever heavy cattle are eligible to a premium, the whole market goes on a healthy basis. In other words, a premium on heavies pulls the others up. Contrariwise, a bad market for big cattle depresses every other weight and grade. Under present and prospective conditions, heavy cattle should command a premium all summer, as the crop laid in last fall is melting away under the process of attrition, and they are getting scarcer each succeeding week. This is indicated by receipts around the market circle during the last week of April, when the ten principal points reported less than 150,000 head, compared with 175,000 the previous week and 210,000 a year ago. That deficiency—or decrease, to be correct—was wholly in heavy cattle, indicating an enormous reduction in tonnage or pounds of beef, which is reflected in current values compared with a year ago. It discredits the spurious philosophy of those tin-pot economists who contend that the law of supply and demand is susceptible of suspension.

Feeders Finding Difficulty in Replacing Big Cattle

Late in April 1,600-pound steers realized $14 at Chicago. It is true that the price was paid sparingly, but it was paid several times. Even rough, oxy cattle were eligible to $11.75, and a long string of heavy bullocks went over the scales at $12 to $13.40, most of them showing margins of $4.50 to $5.25 per cwt. over initial cost last fall, instances of a $5.50 margin being recorded. This can not be repeated, of course, as fleshy steers available during the heavy-cattle débacle last fall at $7.75 to $8.25 are now selling from $10 up, and are scarce at that. Feeders would probably overdo the heavy-cattle deal within a few months if it were possible to get enough aged thin or fleshy animals to introduce to the feed-box, as both corn and cottonseed cake are cheap; but replacement of big cattle is well-nigh impossible. Some near-beef has gone back to the country at $10 to $10.50, but killers have been so intent on securing anything with weight and a decent beef-covering that feeders have had little opportunity to bid. As usual, the eleventh-hour bull coterie would spoil the game. It has ransacked every nook and cranny of the western cattle storehouse for 1,300-pound finished cattle prospects, without getting many. Pasturemen in possession of aged cattle are desirous of getting all the cheap gain possible on grass during the coming season, and are reluctant to part with their property at this juncture.

Finished Yearlings Making Money

Long yearlings selling at $12 to $12.40, regulation light yearlings at $10.75 to $11.75, according to condition, quality, or both, and $10 to $10.85 heifers are paying well for their board. Disgruntled feeders of light cattle, basing their ideas of values on what heavy cattle are realizing, have not a leg

to stand on. Every decently fattened yearling steer or heifer marketed recently has made money. Half-fat yearlings have been thrown overboard so numerously as to create a condition of semi-congestion at intervals. This irrational policy on the part of feeders is to be deprecated, as it is merely a waste of raw material.

Light Dairy-Type Steers Selling Well

There has been a good market for fat steers of the "yellow hammer" type, and it was not impaired by an April run of grassers from southern Texas, which the market absorbed readily. Many of these common light steers show fully as wide a margin, compared with initial and selling cost, as good heavy cattle. A load of light Holstein yearlings sold at $9 in Chicago late in April that cost the feeder $4.50 in Wisconsin last fall; but they had to be fat to do it. There is always a place for fat, light beef, even if quality is lacking; but quality is not an asset in a light steer, if it lacks finish.

Broad Demand for Cheap Beef

But one reason can be assigned for constant dumping of half-fat, decent-quality light cattle, and that is lack of confidence in the summer and fall market. Some of these cattle have been taken back to the country at $9 to $9.75, but on short runs killers have taken them away from feeders to satisfy a consistent demand for cheap beef. Fat cows have sold at the highest prices since the Civil War for the same reason. Cheap beef has a broad market. Kosher cows at $9 to $10, and a raft of butcher cows at $6.50 to $8, tell the story; canning and cutting material realizing $5 to $6 at the high time.

Hogs Have Been Bad Performers

But if the cattle market has not needed the services of a competent apologist, swine trade has worked into a mean rut. An advertised short winter and spring run, owing to decimation of the 1926 pig crop by cholera, "flu," and other causes last fall, has exceeded expectation. The April marketward movement was generous; weight steadily increased, as was logical with corn and hogs wide apart; export demand fell down; the Cotton Belt was stingy in its purchases of hog product; a coal strike did not improve matters; and, for some unaccountable reason, eastern demand for light hogs was sharply contracted, narrowing the spread until the best light hogs were quoted at $10.75 in Chicago, while 300-pound butchers were eligible to $10, and extreme weights sold at $9.80 to $9.90—the lowest price level in two years. This put average cost of droves down close to $10 before the end of April, when a slight reaction occurred. Packers made several palpable efforts to support the market on the late April break, but without success. Accomplishment would have been advantageous to them, as every decline of 10 cents per cwt. in live-hog values depreciated the value of their cellar holdings. At the corresponding time last year light hogs were selling up to $13.70, and heavy butchers at $12.35 to $12.85.

Rise in Lamb Values Not to Last

A semi-sensational April lamb market reflected scarcity. On the last round, Arizona spring lambs sold up to $18, California springers to $17.75, Colorado-fed lambs to $17.25, and shorn lambs to $16.25, compared with $15.50 for wooled and $14.25 for shorn lambs of the old crop a year ago. The fat-sheep market ran into rough weather coincident with a run of Texas wethers, fat ewes dropping from $10.50 to $11.60 to an $8.50 to $9.50 basis within a few days. April lamb values can not be considered durable, although a high market is expected right along, Missouri's crop being short, and that of Tennessee and Kentucky late, owing to excessive moisture.

CATTLE SKY SERENE

J. E. P.

NOT A SINGLE CLOUD can be detected on the cattle-trade horizon, save the menace of Argentine penetration. Canada's surplus cattle and beef production this country is now absorbing, irrespective of the tariff. From a price-disturbance standpoint, the Canuck surplus is inconsequential and ineffective. The Argentine threat is a more serious matter. Modification, even to the extent of admitting 100,000 tons of beef annually, would play hob with domestic cattle values. It is the keynote to the cattle situation.

Beef production is falling so far behind that of 1926, and so far below normal, as to raise a suggestion of actual scarcity. Of course, inevitable appreciation will have the logical effect of restricting consumption, and, with hog and cattle values so radically out of line, adjustment may be looked for; but, with current production running about 15 per cent less than last year, the position of producers would appear impregnable, if Argentina can be prevented from butting in—and that is merely a matter of maintaining present restrictions.

A year ago the visible supply of cattle ran to weight; this season a run of light steers is on the horizon, and, as there is a pronounced disposition to let them go early, tonnage will be further curtailed. Grass beef, discredited as it is by official and private propaganda to popularize light, red beef, to the disadvantage of the dark-colored article, in all probability may have an inning. The summer cattle prospect has not been impaired by a few setbacks recently. Always it has displayed resiliency.

STOCKERS FEW AND HIGH

J. E. P.

INTERMITTENT BUYING of stock cattle suggests indecision in grazing and feeding circles. While the countryward movement from the markets has been somewhat lighter than a year ago, in a numerical sense, it has carried far less tonnage than at that time, when mature fleshy steers were cheap. The average feeder determines his buying policy largely by what cattle cost per head when laid in, and the same motive animates the country banker who advances purchase money. On this account, popular demand centers on light weight in combination with quality, feeders having learned in the school of experience that common and nondescript cattle are poor propositions for summer grazing and finishing.

A few fleshy steers, fit for a quick turn on corn, have gone back to the country at $10 to $10.50 per cwt., but demand for that kind of cattle at the market is neither urgent nor broad, and usually killers grab off anything with a decent beef-covering at more money than feeders are in a mood to pay. This competition extends to light fleshy cattle selling at $8.75 to $9.50. Whenever killers run into a hard picking, they brush feeders aside and get the cattle. Occasionally, when the market overflows, feeders have an inning, but this is rare.

There is no method of ascertaining the volume of the direct movement of unfinished cattle from trans-Missouri pastures direct to feed-lots or grass in the Corn Belt and eastern areas. That eastern pasturemen are short of cattle is an open secret; otherwise the Virginias, Maryland, and other sections would not have paid $9 to $9.25 per cwt. at Chicago for light cattle, clamoring for more at the prices. Mineral Points, Wisconsin, graziers, who have had hard luck in recent years, have been picking up steers in sparing fashion, and will probably go into the season short of their usual quota.

Were it possible to secure any considerable number of thin heavy cattle, eleventh-hour bulls would put them on feed regardless of cost, on the theory that the present $13 market for finished heavy bullocks will continue; but such cattle are available only in limited numbers and at high prices, instances being given where they have been installed at $11 per cwt. Buyers sent afield—west, north, and south—in quest of such cattle, have not earned expense money. Their search has extended from Texas to Alberta. Western pasturemen who have wintered aged cattle are disposed to carry them through the grazing season, to get all the cheap gain possible. Probably the feeder will take them later, as anything with a little weight will stand a grain or cottonseed finish this year.

Naturally clamor for something wearing a hide to go on grass has made a broad market for substitutes, such as thin cows and heifers, which are abnormally high—$5.50 to $6 for cows, and $7.25 to $7.75 for heifers. Grass is a seasonal product that can be utilized only by the bovine and ovine species. Nebuchadnezzar is the only human being on record capable of eating his own grass.

Present and prospective stock-cattle conditions suggest that the breeder occupies a decidedly superior strategic position compared with the feeder, who is justified in walking the floor nights, figuring whence his next instalment of cattle is coming. Unless all the wise ones are wrong, this condition will continue for four or five years at least.

THE DENVER MARKET

BY W. N. FULTON

STEADILY ADVANCING PRICES were the rule in the cattle market at Denver during the entire month of April. Cows and heifers maintained the advance to the end of the month, but during the closing days steer trade was a little slow, with slight declines on all but the best grades. Good fat steers were selling at $10.25 to $11 at the beginning of April. On the 28th a new top for the season was made at $12.75, freight paid, on one load weighing 1.398 pounds, with good killing steers selling at $10.50 to $11.50. Good cows were selling early in April at $6.75 to $7.50; the same grades were bringing $7.50 to $8.25 a month later, with extreme top at the close of the month at $8.50 on choice light heiferish cows. Heifers sold up to $9 for extreme top during March, whereas numerous loads brought $9.75 to $9.85 late in April. Feeding and stocker steers sold largely at $8.25 to $9 early in the month. On the 15th, Gunnison yearlings topped the market at $9.65, freight paid; and the same grades would bring the price at the close. While there are a good many steers reported in feed-lots of Denver territory to be marketed during the next month or two, local traders expect prices to hold up well, as they believe there are none too many for the demand. Cows and heifers are scarce, and there is a general expectation of further advances in these departments of the market.

Hogs.—Hog trade was active during the month, but prices closed considerably lower—much to the surprise of some of the talent. However, buyers have been in a bearish mood during most of the month, not only at Denver, but at other markets as well. There are those who look for higher prices within the next few weeks, while others feel that the market will do well to maintain its present level. Hogs that were selling on April 1 at $11.10, and on the 5th at $11.60, were going over the scales at $10 at the close of the month. There is less discrimination at present, however, between the light-weight and the heavy hogs. Frequently the top prices are paid for hogs weighing up to 225 pounds or more, while a few weeks ago the light lights were most popular. A spread of not more than half a dollar takes the bulk of the hogs at present. Stock pigs continue in good demand, indicating that the country is willing to bank on the future of the hog market.

Sheep.—Lamb-feeders who held their stock for the late spring market watched their holdings grow in value steadily during April. The market made marked advances, and new tops were being registered frequently. Choice lambs were topping the market at $15.25 at the opening of the month; on the closing day $16.25 was paid for several loads, and numerous lots brought $16. California spring lambs sold on May 3 at $17.75 flat. These prices are the highest paid on the Denver market in more than a year. The ewe market dropped sharply late in April, but on the closing days much of the loss was regained. Good wooled ewes were bringing $9.25 to $9.50 early in April; later they dropped to $8 for the best grades, with odd sales up to $9.50 at the close. Clipped ewes of fair grade are now selling at $7.50. Lamb supply in feed-lots tributary to Denver is reported to be almost at the vanishing point, and limited receipts from this quarter are expected from now on. California lambs are moving, and indications point to fairly good supplies from this source during the next few weeks.

Horses.—The demand for horses was good during the month, and prices were reported steady to a shade higher on good heavy drafters. Such stock is selling at $125 to $175 a head, and up for the fancy kinds. Good chunks sell at $50 to $90, and light horses at $40 down. The light kinds move slowly, while the demand for heavy work-horses is good.

LIVE STOCK AT STOCK-YARDS

APPENDED ARE TABLES showing receipts, shipments, and slaughter of live stock at sixty-eight markets for the month of March, 1927, compared with March, 1926, and for the three months ending March, 1927 and 1926:

RECEIPTS

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Cattle*	1,742,909	1,811,262	5,129,539	5,201,900
Calves	571,303	578,031	1,550,713	1,589,537
Hogs	3,754,154	3,579,469	11,314,167	11,255,140
Sheep	1,558,422	1,694,537	4,794,181	4,728,638

TOTAL SHIPMENTS†

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Cattle*	606,703	572,360	1,801,442	1,779,140
Hogs	1,367,778	1,427,913	4,210,072	4,353,442
Sheep	718,631	694,872	2,207,071	2,003,674

STOCKER AND FEEDER SHIPMENTS

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Cattle*	200,487	184,395	580,296	586,591
Calves	18,459	13,000	48,724	44,339
Hogs	101,709	56,184	294,557	179,799
Sheep	140,414	83,300	483,939	345,688

LOCAL SLAUGHTER

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Cattle*	1,134,192	1,220,799	3,282,299	3,378,010
Calves	414,938	439,315	1,127,003	1,164,452
Hogs	2,386,216	2,143,592	7,085,901	6,899,227
Sheep	842,837	1,001,338	2,592,683	3,720,409

*Includes calves. †Includes stockers and feeders.

COMPARATIVE LIVE-STOCK PRICES

BELOW ARE FIGURES showing prices on the principal classes and grades of live stock at Chicago on May 2, 1927, compared with March 28, 1927, and April 30, 1926:

	May 2, 1927	Mar. 28, 1927	Apr. 30, 1926
SLAUGHTER STEERS:			
Choice (1,100 to 1,500 lbs.)	$12.40-13.90	$11.75-13.60	$10.00-10.65
Good	11.00-13.25	10.50-12.75	9.50-10.00
Medium	9.50-11.50	9.25-11.00	8.35- 9.50
Choice (1,100 lbs. down)	11.50-13.00	11.50-12.50	9.85-10.65
Good	10.25-12.40	9.75-11.75	9.50-10.00
Medium	9.25-11.00	8.75-10.50	8.25- 9.50
YEARLING STEERS AND HEIFERS:			
Good to Choice (850 lbs. down)	9.50-11.50	9.25-12.25	8.65-10.00
HEIFERS:			
Good to Choice (850 lbs. up)	8.75-10.85	7.75-11.00	7.25- 9.75
Common to Medium (all weights)	6.50- 9.00	6.00- 8.75	5.75- 8.35
COWS:			
Good to Choice	6.90- 9.15	6.85- 8.65	6.65- 8.00
FEEDER AND STOCKER STEERS:			
Good to Choice (800 lbs. up)	8.50- 9.75	8.00- 9.50	8.15- 9.00
Common to Medium	7.25- 8.50	7.00- 8.00	6.00- 8.00
Good to Choice (800 lbs. down)	8.25- 9.50	7.85- 9.25	8.00- 8.75
Common to Medium	7.00- 8.25	6.75- 7.85	6.50- 8.15
HOGS:			
Medium Weight (200 to 250 lbs.)	10.15-10.85	10.65-11.65	12.55-13.25
LAMBS:			
Medium to Choice	14.00-16.40	14.50-16.75	13.75-15.75

THE CALIFORNIA MARKET

INCREASED ACTIVITY in the sale of California grass cattle, resulting from a greater supply of animals becoming ready for market, has been noticeable for some time past, according to the California Cattlemen's Association. Good steers remain steady, in spite of increased supplies, and are moving at $8.25 to $8.50, f. o. b. cars. Cows are moving at $6.50 to $6.75, f. o. b., for a good quality, and heifers at $7.25

to $7.50. Calves continue to bring $12 to $12.50 for the lighter weights, the greatest demand being centered on those under 220 pounds. All classes of cattle are being cleaned up as fast as offered, and the market is in good condition.

Feeder and stock cattle continue to hold the interest of buyers. Some feeders are being sold for immediate delivery, and contracts have been made for fall delivery on New Mexico and Arizona weaner calves.

LIVE-STOCK MARKET QUOTATIONS
Monday, May 2, 1927

CATTLE AND CALVES

STEERS:	KANSAS CITY	OMAHA	DENVER
Good to Choice (1,500 lbs. up)	$11.00-13.15	$10.60-13.00	....
Choice (1,100 to 1,500 lbs.)	11.25-13.00	11.15-13.00	....
Good	10.00-12.40	10.00-11.90	$ 8.85-10.40
Medium	8.00-10.75	8.25-10.50	8.00- 9.25
Common	6.25- 8.00	6.25- 8.25	6.30- 8.00
Choice (1,100 lbs. down)	10.85-12.15	10.85-12.00	....
Good	9.50-11.25	9.50-11.15	8.50- 9.90
Medium	7.75-10.00	8.00-10.00	7.75- 8.85
Common	6.25- 8.00	6.15- 8.25	6.10- 7.75
Low Cutters and Cutters	4.75- 6.25	4.75- 6.25	5.00- 6.10
LIGHT YEARLING STEERS AND HEIFERS:			
Good to Choice (850 lbs. down)	8.35-10.50	8.50-10.75	8.35-10.00
HEIFERS:			
Good to Choice (850 lbs. up)	7.75-10.00	7.50-10.25	8.10- 9.85
Common to Medium (all weights)	5.75- 8.25	5.75- 8.25	6.00- 8.60
COWS:			
Good to Choice	6.75- 8.35	6.60- 8.75	7.25- 8.65
Common to Medium	5.60- 6.75	5.60- 6.60	5.75- 7.25
Low Cutters and Cutters	4.00- 5.60	4.25- 5.60	4.00- 5.75
BULLS:			
Good to Choice (1,500 lbs. up)	6.35- 6.75	6.35- 7.00	....
Good to Choice (1,500 lbs. down)	6.35- 7.00	5.35- 7.35	6.40- 7.25
Cutters to Medium	5.00- 6.35	5.15- 6.35	5.00- 6.40
CALVES:			
Medium to Choice	7.00- 9.00	6.50- 9.00	6.25- 8.75
Culls and Common	5.00- 7.00	4.75- 6.50	4.50- 6.25
VEALERS:			
Medium to Choice	7.00-10.50	7.00-10.00	9.50-12.50
Culls and Common	4.00- 7.00	4.50- 7.00	5.00- 9.50
FEEDERS AND STOCKERS—			
STEERS:			
Good to Choice (800 lbs. up)	8.40- 9.85	8.00- 9.75	8.25- 9.75
Common to Medium	6.25- 8.40	6.00- 8.00	6.50- 8.25
Good to Choice (800 lbs. down)	8.25- 9.85	7.85- 9.65	8.15- 9.65
Common to Medium	6.00- 8.25	5.75- 7.85	6.25- 8.15
HEIFERS:			
Common to Choice	5.75- 8.50	5.75- 8.25	6.00- 8.15
COWS:			
Common to Choice	5.00- 6.50	4.75- 6.25	5.00- 6.50
CALVES:			
Common to Choice	6.00- 9.85	5.75- 9.75	6.00- 9.50

HOGS

Heavy Weights, Medium to Choice	$ 9.25- 9.90	$ 9.25- 9.75	$ 9.00- 9.65
Medium Weights, Medium to Choice	9.65-10.10	9.60- 9.85	9.40-10.05
Light Weights, Common to Choice	9.85-10.15	9.70- 9.95	9.50-10.00
Light Lights, Common to Choice	9.90-10.25	9.70- 9.95	9.60- 9.90
Packing Sows	7.85- 8.85	8.25- 8.75	7.75- 8.50
Slaughter Pigs, Medium to Choice	11.00-11.50	....	....
Feeder and Stocker Pigs, Med. to Ch.	11.00-11.75	9.75-10.50	....

SHEEP AND LAMBS

LAMBS:			
Medium to Choice (84 lbs. down)	$13.50-15.25	$14.00-15.50	$14.65-16.40
Culls and Common (all weights)	10.50-13.50	11.00-14.00	13.00-14.65
YEARLING WETHERS:			
Medium to Choice	10.50-13.50	10.75-13.25	....
EWES:			
Common to Choice	5.50- 8.50	5.25- 7.50	....
Culls	1.50- 5.50	2.00- 5.25	....
SPRING LAMBS:			
Good to Choice	16.75-18.00	16.50-18.10	....
Medium	15.50-16.75	15.50-16.50	....
Culls and Common	11.75-15.50	12.00-15.50	....

CAUSES OF HOG DECLINE

J. E. P.

USUALLY SEASONAL SOLICITUDE concerns cattle-trade conditions; right now the query is: "What's the matter with the hog market?" Several causes may be assigned, not the least of which is generous production. Sporadic disease outbreaks last fall were responsible for a "hog shortage" hue and cry, but, as in the case of most advertised deficiencies, it has failed to materialize. Weight is somewhat less than last year, but present indications are that hog slaughter the country over during the first half of 1927 will exceed that of 1926. In any event, there is no semblance of a shortage.

In the enumeration of bearish hog-market factors may be enumerated: diminished export trade, due to rehabilitation of European swine herds with cheap American corn; restricted southern buying, in consequence of low-price cotton and floods in the low-lying areas; cheap cottonseed products, adversely affecting domestic lard consumption and export demand.

England is getting an adequate supply of bacon from the continent, diverting Canada's excess production to this market. Germany is now producing practically all the meat she needs, but is buying American lard. France is unable to buy our meats because she can not swap for wine. Prior to the war France took our fat-backs on practically a wine-exchange basis —a system that the Volstead Act disrupted. Germany, also, would buy more American meat if she could sell us wine.

Meanwhile stocks of meats and lard have accumulated until burdensome. Nearly 100,000,000 pounds of lard and 750,000,000 pounds of meats disclose the weight of the load that packers and their bankers are carrying. There is nothing to bull the hog market on.

LAMBS IN STRONG POSITION

J. E. P.

CHEAPER LAMB PREDICTION has been discredited by a whirlwind fat market on which western spring lambs went to $18 per cwt. at Chicago, wooled Colorado lambs to $17.25, and shorn lambs to $16.25 late in April. Another manifestation of underlying strength is a rip-roaring range trade on a fall-delivery basis that in its culmination stage at mid-April reached 11 to 11½ cents. Just a year ago Colorado feeders, who have been responsible for this, insisted that 8 cents was the limit of endurance on their part, manifesting sincerity by "laying out" of the market until late in the season, corn-belters grabbing off the cream of the crop meanwhile. As it has worked out, Corn Belt feeders lost money, while Colorado operators, going to market late in the season, have had a residue to put away in the bank. Between the inspiration afforded by a little profit, a carry-over of hay, and practical assurance of big hay and beet crops this season, Colorado feeders have determined to take time by the forelock, having secured half their feeding-lamb requirements already.

The next move is up to the corn-belter, and he is saying nothing—not even looking wise. He is in much the same position as the Colorado operator a year ago, smarting under losses and vowing determination never to feed another lamb except at his own price. Ultimately he will realize, consciously or otherwise, that the obdurate law of supply and demand is working. Should the corn-belter sulk all season, as the Colorado feeder did last year, it will be bear argument with respect to prices; but at least 75 per cent of those Corn Belt farmers who fed lambs last season will repeat, and others, who did not get in then, will try their hands. Feed is always a factor of importance, and in the Corn Belt that factor has yet to be determined.

Crop prospects are propitious, however, and, with ample grass, it is logical to assume that the first available thin western lambs will get bids, as they put on cheap gains. Colorado is in a mood to tuck away as many lambs before it goes into winter quarters as in 1925.

The size of the crop will have much to do with making feeder-lamb prices. Statistics on the subject—guesstimates, to be more correct—are worthless, whether they come from official or private sources. That the 1927 western lamb crop will exceed that of last year is improbable, especially as considerable loss in consequence of April storms was reported, flocks having left winter quarters for summer range previously.

HOLDINGS OF FROZEN AND CURED MEATS

BELOW IS A SUMMARY of storage holdings of frozen and cured meats on April 1, 1927, as compared with April 1, 1926, and average holdings on that date for the last five years (in pounds):

Commodity	Apr. 1, 1927	Apr. 1, 1926	Five-Year Average
Frozen beef	50,931,000	43,528,000	63,070,000
*Cured beef	26,214,000	27,253,000	25,008,000
Lamb and mutton	2,970,000	3,289,000	3,322,000
Frozen pork	193,343,000	129,259,000	172,586,000
*Dry salt pork	124,714,000	151,286,000	167,756,000
*Pickled pork	418,724,000	346,049,000	428,548,000
Miscellaneous	60,800,000	52,399,000	70,157,000
Totals	877,696,000	753,063,000	930,447,000
Lard	92,090,000	93,108,000	96,357,000

*Cured or in process of cure.

PACKERS ON APRIL'S TRADE CONDITIONS

FROM A REVIEW of the meat and live-stock situation during April, 1927, issued by the Institute of American Meat Packers, we quote the following paragraphs:

PORK AND SWINE

"In the estimation of some packers, the demand for lard from abroad was the best that the industry has enjoyed for several months. However, apart from the demand for lard, and a limited amount of buying of hams by English traders for prompt and future shipment, there was little activity of note in the English trade or the European trade generally. Prices of most meats in the English market, although showing some improvement during the month, are still below parity with prices in the United States.

"In the domestic field, there was a fair demand for fresh pork. It was not quite broad enough, however, to absorb all of the supplies, and, as a consequence, some product had to be frozen. Prices were fairly steady for the month as a whole.

"Lard moved into consumption in very satisfactory volume, but price levels were relatively low.

"Hog prices, in keeping with trade conditions, continued to decline somewhat. Supplies were about the same as during the same month a year ago.

CATTLE AND BEEF

"Receipts of cattle early in the month were light, and slowly increased until the latter part, when they again decreased correspondingly. Prices advanced during the first part of the month to a new high point for the year, with a rather wide spread between grades, but declined gradually toward the close, owing to a slow demand at the prevailing high prices. There was a notable shortage of heavy steers during the month, and a marked limitation in the supply of good, finished beef. Cows, and steers of lower grades, were relatively high.

"The markets for dressed beef advanced with increased costs during the first part of the month, but then declined toward the close.

"Hide stocks sold well up to production, at strong prices.

SHEEP AND LAMBS

"Receipts of sheep and lambs continued light, and were considerably less than a year ago. Aged sheep were exceptionally scarce. California spring lambs arrived in larger numbers and found a good outlet at steady prices.

"Eastern markets for the dressed product were erratic, with rapid declines as well as rapid advances throughout the month.

"The wool market was about the same as last month, with little change in prices."

FEEDSTUFFS

HAY PRICES at Kansas City on May 2 were as follows: Prairie—No. 1, $13.50 to $15.50; No. 2, $12 to $13; No. 3, $9.50 to $11.50; packing, $7.50 to $9; alfalfa—select dairy, $23.50 to $25; choice, $21 to $23; No. 1, $19 to $20.50; standard, $17 to $18.50; No. 2, $12.50 to $16.50; No. 3, $10 to $12; timothy—No. 1, $15 to $15.50; standard, $14 to $14.50; No. 2, $13 to $13.50; No. 3, $11.50 to $12.50; clover-mixed—light, $15 up; No 1, $14 to $14.50; No. 2, $12.50 to $13.50; clover—No. 1, $17 to $18; No. 2, $14 to $16.50.

WHOLESALE PRICES ON WESTERN DRESSED MEATS

Monday, May 2, 1927

FRESH BEEF AND VEAL

STEERS (heavy weights, 700 lbs. up):	CHICAGO	BOSTON	NEW YORK
Choice	$18.00-20.00	$19.00-19.50	$18.00-20.00
Good	16.50-18.00	17.50-19.00	17.00-18.50
STEERS (light and medium weights, 700 lbs. down):			
Choice	18.00-20.00	....	18.00-20.00
Good	16.00-18.00	....	17.00-18.50
STEERS (all weights):			
Medium	15.00-16.00	15.50-17.50	16.00-17.00
Common	12.50-14.50	....	13.00-16.00
COWS:			
Good	15.00-16.00	14.50-15.50	14.00-15.00
Medium	14.00-15.00	13.50-14.50	13.00-14.00
Common	12.00-13.50	12.50-13.50	12.00-13.00
VEALERS:			
Choice	21.00-22.00	....	20.00-22.00
Good	17.00-19.00	....	16.00-19.00
Medium	15.00-17.00	13.00-15.00	14.00-17.00
Common	13.00-15.00	11.00-13.00	12.00-14.00

FRESH LAMB AND MUTTON

SPRING LAMB:			
Good to Choice	$34.00-36.00	$31.00-34.00	$36.00-38.00
Medium	33.00-34.00	....	34.00-36.00
LAMB (30 to 42 lbs.):			
Choice	32.00-34.00	31.00-32.00	33.00-36.00
Good	31.00-32.00	29.00-31.00	32.00-34.00
LAMB (42 to 55 lbs.):			
Choice	....	29.00-31.00	32.00-34.00
Good	....	27.00-29.00	30.00-32.00
LAMB (all weights):			
Medium	28.00-29.00	27.00-29.00	29.00-31.00
Common	26.00-27.00	....	29.00-30.00
MUTTON (Ewes):			
Good	19.00-21.00	16.00-18.00	18.00-20.00
Medium	17.00-19.00	14.00-16.00	16.00-18.00
Common	15.00-17.00	12.00-14.00	14.00-16.00

HIDE TRADE IS HEALTHY

TANNERS' RESISTANCE to further advances has had the effect of slowing up the hide market, but the undertone is strong, especially as the quality of packer hides improves at this season. Leather business is healthy, and shoe-factory operations have been maintained at a good volume.

Evidence is accumulating that a glutted hide market is a matter of history. Recently there has been a scarcity of country hides, and the packer output has been well sold up right along. Substantial reduction in the take-off, due to a shortage of mature cattle, is also a bullish influence. Tanners are looking for foreign hides to meet this emergency, sending liberal orders to the British market; but even there supply is short, and cost shows little economy.

Buyers are less discriminating with respect to weight, description, and other details that have been important in recent years. Demand for patent leather is so urgent, and manufacturers of that product are so insistent on securing almost any stock, even to heavy bull hides, that weights up to 50 pounds are now dealt in and known as light hides. Canadian hides have been cleaned up on a domestic price basis.

Packer hides have been marked up on heavy sales, Chicago packers closing out 130,000 the third week in April, which puts the market in a strong technical position. Independent packer stocks advanced along with the rest of the list, and local killers were able to obtain their asking price of 16 cents for May slaughter native cows and steers, with the branded going at 14½ cents. Previously some of the smaller killers accepted one-half cent less on their natives.

Early May quotations on packer hides follow:

	Cents per Pound
Spready native steers	18 -19
Heavy native steers	16
Heavy native cows	15
Light native cows	16
Butt-branded steers	15 -15½
Heavy Texas steers	15 -15½
Colorado steers	14½
Light Texas steers	14½-15½
Branded cows	14½
Native bulls	11

DROP IN WOOL PRICES NOT ANTICIPATED

NOTHING IN THE SITUATION or the prospect justifies expectation or assumption of lower wool prices. Foreign markets are stronger than the proverbial cat's back; large quantities of foreign wool in bond on this side of the Atlantic have recently been shipped to Europe, to take advantage of higher prices than are available here; the goods market is by no means congested, and the public is buying clothing consistently and in large quantities. Trade harpies at Boston and other concentration points indulge in continuous blather regarding high cost of wool and depression in the textile industry —a condition that must be attributed in a measure to inefficiency, the tariff having practically excluded foreign fabrics from this market. Just what is the matter with the textile industry would be worth knowing. Certainly it is not prosperous; but it is equally certain that consumers are paying exorbitant prices for clothing. Solution of the mystery might be found in the sphere of distribution.

In so far as primary markets are concerned, the season is over at foreign centers. American buyers have shown little interest in recent Southern Hemisphere or London sales, but buying of left-over wools has been spirited. At the last London sale American buyers took less than 1,000 bales, and are not expected to enter seriously into competition at the ensuing sale, when 30,000 bales will be offered.

At the Atlantic seaboard, prices are nominal on a small and intermittent volume of trade, the obvious purpose of mill men being to keep prices down. In this they have had no conspicuous success, as no bargain sales have been held. It is normally a dull season between spring and fall periods, when piece-goods manufacturers operate cautiously. Later, when the residue of the 1927 domestic clip gets out of growers' hands, there will be more incentive to mark prices up. At present fine Delaine in the grease is selling on eastern markets at 44 to 45 cents; half-blood, at 44 to 45 cents; three-eighths, at 43 to 44 cents; and quarter-blood, at 42 to 43 cents. Recent sales of territory or western wool have been made on a 90- to 92-cent clean basis, landed at Boston, for fine and medium wools on the French combing order. In Washington, wools of this type have sold at 26 to 28 cents; in Nevada, growers are asking 30 to 32 cents for fine and fine-medium combing wools—approximately 90 cents clean, landed in Boston. Fair-stapled Utah wool has sold at 33 cents. In Texas 35 cents has been paid for twelve-month clips.

TRADE REVIEW

BALANCE ON FOREIGN TRADE IN MARCH

MODERATE EXPORT EXCESSES have marked our foreign-trade account for the first three months of the current year, contrary to what was the case at the beginning of 1926, when the balance turned against us. Owing to the large export surplus accumulated during the latter half of 1926, our favorable balance for the last nine months shows an increase of over 142 per cent over the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. The figures follow:

	March		Nine Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Exports	$410,000,000	$374,407,000	$3,804,492,000	$3,670,675,000
Imports	377,000,000	442,899,000	3,173,748,000	3,409,790,000
Excess of exports	$ 33,000,000	$*68,492,000	$ 630,744,000	$ 260,885,000

*Excess of imports.

EXPORTS OF MEATS IN MARCH

EXPORTS OF MEAT PRODUCTS and animal fats from the United States for the month of March and the three months ending March, 1927, as compared with the corresponding periods of the previous year, were as below (in pounds):

BEEF PRODUCTS

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Beef, fresh	160,849	196,959	585,633	669,128
Beef, pickled	1,557,942	1,442,753	4,304,064	4,304,600
Oleo oil	7,684,299	10,526.895	23,385,453	22,479,073
Totals	9,403,090	12,166,607	28,275,150	27,452,801

PORK PRODUCTS

	March		Three Months Ending March	
	1927	1926	1927	1926
Pork, fresh	909,816	1,291,973	1,986,248	6,058,689
Pork, pickled	2,036,914	2,521,542	5,853,477	8,036,035
Bacon	8,566,649	13,596,675	28,223,829	49,718,847
Cumberland sides	251,934	1,489,239	1,206,501	5,820,054
Hams and shoulders	9,252,661	18,116,623	28,636,249	58,222,239
Wiltshire sides	36,764	930,682	114,087	4,213,452
Lard	53,039,900	64,259,062	162,765,464	206,285,197
Lard compounds	693,650	1,441,872	3,845,466	4,247,758
Neutral lard	1,774,478	1,729,481	5,062,982	5,097,905
Totals	76,562,766	105,377,149	237,694,303	347,700,176

BRITAIN'S MEAT SUPPLIES

TOTAL SUPPLIES of fresh and frozen beef in the United Kingdom in 1926 were 3,358,876,000 pounds, compared with 3,275,861,000 pounds the previous year, or an increase of 2.5 per cent, according to the annual *Review of the Chilled and Frozen Meat Trade* published by Weddel & Co., the British importers. Of this quantity, 1,546,716,000 pounds, or 46 per cent, were imported (401,710,000 pounds frozen, 1,083,974,000 pounds chilled, 3,468,000 pounds fresh-killed, and 57,564,000 pounds in the form of live stock brought in for further finishing), while 1,812,160,000 pounds, or 54 per cent, were home-grown.

Of mutton and lamb, total supplies were 1,265,772,000 pounds, against 1,248,200,000 pounds in 1926—an increase of 1.4 per cent. Importations amounted to 601,388,000 pounds, or 47.5 per cent; the home-grown article, to 664,384,000 pounds, or 52.5 per cent. Practically all the imported mutton and lamb was in the frozen state.

Argentina furnished 162,165,000 pounds of the frozen beef (against 171,053,000 pounds in 1925), Australia 128,686,000 pounds (153,926,000), and New Zealand 60,572,000 pounds (58,316,000). The chilled beef nearly all came from Argentina. Of mutton and lamb, New Zealand supplied 300,272,000 pounds (280,280,000 pounds in 1925), Argentina 142,188,000 pounds (206,255,000), and Australia 84,260,000 pounds (59,078,000).

For 1927 the prediction is made that home supplies of beef in the United Kingdom will be normal, while imports from both Australia and New Zealand are liable to decrease, owing to the long-continued drought that seriously cut down cattle numbers in Queensland, and the lower values ruling at the British market. Argentina, however, is enjoying favorable weather conditions and will probably increase her shipments. Supplies of mutton and lamb are looked for to be greater than ever. Not only have the sheep flocks of Great Britain been growing steadily in recent years, but more is expected to be sent from Australia, while New Zealand and Argentine shipments are not likely to be materially reduced.

Domestic hog production in Great Britain and Ireland has not increased so rapidly as was expected when a gap was made in British pork imports by the order barring out fresh meats from the continent of Europe. Supplies of fresh pork from all sources remain far below normal, and difficulty is being experienced in keeping bacon factories supplied with hogs of suitable weight. As a result of this condition, prices show an advancing tendency. For the first three months of 1927 the price of fresh pork on the London market averaged $28.85 per 100 pounds, against $25.89 a year ago and $21.37 in 1925.

With regard to American exports of cured pork products to Great Britain, the situation is described as dull. In the two months of January and February of this year only 16,240,000 pounds of American bacon were exported to British markets, against 33,463,000 pounds during the first two months of 1926. Additional difficulties in maintaining the American trade are anticipated from the application after August 31, 1927, of the act prohibiting the importation into Great Britain of meats treated with borax.

WORLD'S BEEF AND MUTTON TRADE

FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT of Weddel & Co., of London, we quote the below statistics of the world's exports of frozen and chilled beef, mutton, and lamb for the year 1926, with comparative data for 1925 (in pounds):

	1926	1925
Beef—		
Australia	141,120,000	276,416,000
New Zealand	43,680,000	79,072,000
Canada	3,584,000	10,528,000
South Africa	34,048,000	21,728,000
South America	1,841,952,000	1,942,976,000
Other countries	14,112,000	7,616,000
Totals	2,078,496,000	2,338,336,000
Mutton and Lamb—		
Australia	89,376,000	56,672,000
New Zealand	283,360,000	291,200,000
South America	232,736,000	293,664,000
Other countries	896,000	19,264,000
Totals	606,368,000	660,800,000

FOREIGN

ENGLISH LIVE-STOCK LETTER

BY JOSEPH RAYMOND

[*Special Correspondence to The Producer*]

LONDON, April 12, 1927.

THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1927 has shown a slight, but persistent, cheapening tendency in the various live-stock markets of Great Britain. Fat cattle at the end of March were only 26 per cent dearer than pre-war, and were at their lowest level in recent years. Both dairy cows and store cattle were also comparatively cheap at from 25 to 27 per cent above the pre-war level. On the other hand, fat sheep, and also pigs, at the end of the quarter have risen about 1 cent per pound estimated dressed carcass weight, as compared with the previous month, and for these meats the index figure is a point higher, at 45 per cent dearer than in the period 1911-13.

It is curious how the meat-consuming capacity of Great Britain survives in spite of the acutest trade depression; for it was proved last year that, notwithstanding the terrible dislocation of business by the general strike, and also the coal strike, more meat than ever was eaten. True, the average price paid by the consumer was 16 per cent lower than in 1925, and only 34 per cent above the pre-war level; but that only reveals that Britain is pre-eminently a large and increasing consumer of meat, provided that that meat is delivered at cheap prices. At the opening of the present spring season, when lamb comes into favor, the price of New Zealand Canterbury frozen lamb is 18½ cents per pound wholesale in the London Central Markets, or just 2 cents below the value of a year ago. When it is considered that present supplies on hand are greatly in excess of those a twelvemonth ago, this moderate reduction in value may be regarded as evidence of the comparative prosperity of the general meat market in Great Britain at a time when ordinary trade auguries are none too settled.

As to the prospects ahead, a leading authority expects a full maintenance of the consumptive demand. As to supply, it is forecast that mutton and lamb will in all probability be more abundant than last year. The present Australian season for these meats has not quite come up to expectations as regards volume, but the total will probably be slightly heavier than in 1926. New Zealand will probably ship slightly less than last year, but the proportion of lambs from that source will probably be heavier, the total weight of meat remaining about the same.

The "beef war" waged between the leading British and American meat companies is a topic which has for months past been stirring the trade to its depths. The prevalence of chilled-beef supplies in Britain's markets overshadows all the rest of the business, home and imported, as on occasion of glut the chilled article, itself a commodity of high quality, has to be cleared almost regardless of price. It is nothing uncommon to see prime chilled hindquarters being sold in Smithfield Market, London, at 6 cents per pound and less. This, of course, affects the adjacent sections of the trade, mutton values receding in consequence, and accumulations in store resulting from the diversion of business. The meat-retailer of Britain finds in chilled beef his most profitable stock-in-trade, and it is on the basis of chilled beef that meat-retailers, numbering 45,000 up and down the country, have been reaping such high profits that government commissions have repeatedly charged them with "profiteering."

There has lately been conducted in the public press a rather acrid discussion between what are known as the smaller British companies operating in Argentina and the larger companies centered in the ownership of Vestey Brothers. The smaller companies lay the responsibility for the break-up of the understanding between the various exporting companies, as to the percentages of export allocated to each, at the door of Messrs. Vestey, in the fact that they have introduced two new works into the business, and have to some extent mulcted the smaller companies of what they regard as their new percentage of export. The small companies call Vestey, Swift, and Armour the "Big Three," and complain that those three parties should have taken control of 69 per cent of the whole trade, to which is added the 6 per cent of the River Plate Company, of which Vestey has the selling interest in Great Britain, making 75 per cent in all. The Smithfield and Argentine Meat Company, which has only 5 per cent allocated to it, is standing out for at least 7 per cent, and, so far as the trade on this side can see, there is as yet no sign of agreement and end of the "beef war." One or two, however, have said that they believe an agreement is not far off.

The great depression which for the past few years has hung over the frozen-beef export business from Australia and New Zealand, on account of the superior competition of the chilled-beef trade in Britain, has shown no signs of change, and today, after all the proposals and attempts to find a solution of the matter, those in the business seem agreed that prospects ahead of frozen beef, so far as British Empire trade is concerned, are of the dullest. The recent shipment made from Brisbane, Queensland, of a small cargo of several hundred hindquarters of beef from Swift's works, under a chilling system exploited by a company known as the Perfect Food Process Proprietary, Ltd., was successful in its way. It was said to have demonstrated that beef can be carried safely at a chilling temperature across the Antipodes. The cargo arrived in London in a fairly fresh condition after a voyage of sixty-three days, lengthened by delays en route, and the meat was sold in Smithfield, London, actually seventy-three days after the date of slaughter in Brisbane. The prices fetched were between 6 and 8 cents per pound wholesale in Smithfield, as compared with 2 cents dearer for prime Argentine chilled beef sales at the same time. The patent system under which the meat was carried merely consists in the arrangement for blowing air regularly, and under strict control as to velocity, temperature, and humidity, over the suspended quarters, and another shipment is anticipated for June. Those who know Australian meat resources state that the Commonwealth has neither the quality nor the quantity of beef available to render such a chilled shipment business to be carried on with Britain successful in competition with that from the Argentine.

Iceland to Export Frozen Mutton

Salted mutton has for many years formed a large part of Iceland's exports. Lately, with government support, experiments have been made with freezing the meat, and a plant is now being constructed at Reykjavik for the export of frozen mutton to near-by countries.

France Raises Meat-Inspection Tax

The French tax on imported meat, which hitherto has been 1 franc per 100 kilos on fresh or frozen meat and 1.50 francs on salted pork, has been increased to 5 francs per 100 kilos. This increase, according to American packers, will be another serious impediment to exports of meats from North and South America.

ROUND THE RANGE

LIVE-STOCK AND RANGE REPORT FOR APRIL

Ranges.—Spring feed prospects in the range states were very promising, and there was generally a good supply of moisture, says the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in its April report. During March the dry situation in eastern Montana, western Nebraska, and western Kansas had been relieved, and much-needed moisture had fallen in Utah, Idaho, and Nevada. The feed situation in Texas was unusually favorable, with good prospects in New Mexico and Arizona. The region west of the Continental Divide had a much more promising range outlook for the coming summer than a year ago. A few dry spots were reported from eastern Colorado, the Texas Panhandle, and northeastern Wyoming. Condition of ranges was estimated to be 88 per cent of normal, compared with 86 per cent in March.

Cattle.—Cattle were going on spring feed in fine condition, with breeding cows in good shape and generally favorable prospects for a large calf crop. Winter and early spring losses had been light, and in the dry areas concentrated feeds had made it possible to carry the cattle through in good flesh. The cattle business seemed to be getting on a somewhat firmer basis, with better prices for stock cattle and a slight tendency to restock. Fed cattle from western feed-lots were bringing a much better return to the feeders than a year ago. The spring movement from the Southwest will be lighter than last season, but the cattle will be in better condition. Condition of cattle at the beginning of April was 90 per cent of normal, against 89 per cent in March and 93 per cent a year ago.

Sheep.—Sheep on the western ranges were mostly in very good condition. Breeding ewes were in good shape, and early lambing had generally resulted in a large, thrifty crop of lambs. Sheep and lamb losses had been very light. Lamb contracting for fall delivery gained considerable headway in March, with most activity in Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico, prices ranging from 10 to 11 cents. Most of the contracting had been by local dealers and western feeders, with little activity on the part of Corn Belt feeders.

SPRING MOVEMENT OF CATTLE FROM SOUTHWEST

Reports to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics place the 1927 spring movement of cattle from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to points outside of these states at 531,000 head, compared with 581,000 in 1926 and 800,000 in 1925, or a decrease of 9 and 34 per cent, respectively. In addition to the number going to outside points, it is estimated that Texas will move 406,000 head to markets and other points within the state. This intrastate movement last spring was 483,000, compared with 410,000 in 1925.

Feed conditions on Texas ranges are unusually good this season, and are being supplemented by a liberal supply of cheap cottonseed products, corn, and other feeds. The demand for cattle for northern pastures has been light, and, with a large amount of feed at home, cattlemen have not been anxious to move their cattle to pasture in other states. Present indications are that there will be a larger percentage of the cattle mov-

ing direct to market. There is a strong local demand for breeding stock, and it is expected that the cattle moving this spring will be made up of more steers, and fewer cows, heifers, and calves, than in past years.

In New Mexico ranges are generally good, with a few dry spots, but there is a large supply of cheap feedstuff. Last year's cattle shipments were heavy, and it seems that there will be a short supply to move this season.

Feed conditions in Arizona are also very good, and the heavy movement of the past two years has cut the available supply of cattle. There will be fewer cows and aged steers to move this spring.

FEWER CATTLE ON FEED

Only about 92 per cent as many cattle were on feed in the eleven Corn Belt states on April 1, 1927, as on the same date a year ago, reports the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Decreased feeding operations were indicated in all states but one—Indiana.

An advancing cattle market, and relatively low prices on corn and concentrates, have resulted in a keen demand for feeders of all kinds. Present supplies, however, indicate that marketings of fed cattle this summer will not equal those of 1926, and that the number of highly finished animals will fall short of last year's record.

CONDITION OF EARLY LAMB CROP

Conditions in most of the early lamb regions have been more favorable this spring than last, and on April 1 the lambs on the whole were better developed than a year ago, reports the Market News Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. While rainfall had been excessive in some areas, and sunshine was deficient generally, temperatures were mostly moderate, pastures made good growth, supplies of green feed were larger, and prospects for spring ranges and pastures were much better than on April 1, 1926. Marketing in volume will be earlier than last year. Lambs will be heavier and of better quality, and the supply before July 1 will be considerably larger.

Feed conditions in California and Arizona were reported as excellent. Lambs had grown rapidly and were of high quality. In California, over 300,000 lambs had already been contracted, but many were yet unsold. Eastern shipments may total upward of 450,000 head. The feeder end of the early lambs will be small. The movement of early range-raised lambs from Arizona in May and June may reach 60,000.

In the southeastern states, weather conditions had continued favorable for the early lambs, although the latter part of March brought heavy rains and much cloudy weather. Pastures made an early start and promised to be unusually good this spring.

In the Corn Belt states the warm, bright weather during the first half of March gave the early lambs a good start, and pastures on the first of April were more advanced than last year. The proportion of early lambs was reported as somewhat larger than last year.

In the northwestern states weather conditions during March were not favorable for growth of the early lambs, there being only a few bright days, and temperatures were unseasonably low. While on April 1 pastures and range grasses were backward, abundant soil moisture promised exceptionally good feed with the coming of warmer weather.

In Texas, feed conditions have continued very favorable, and all sheep were in fine condition by April 1. Wethers and yearlings were fat, and marketings in May and June are expected to be larger than last year. The abundance of feed is, however, encouraging the holding in the state of all kinds of stock.

BRANCH OFFICES OF PACIFIC CREDIT CORPORATION

For the purpose of looking after the placing of farm and live-stock loans in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, under the Agricultural Credits Act, a branch office of the Pacific National Agricultural Credit Corporation, of San Francisco, has been established at 551 First National Bank Building, El Paso, Texas, under the management of Kenneth D. Oliver, of the field department of the California organization. An office has likewise been opened at 134 South Central Street, Phoenix, in charge of H. B. Embach, secretary of the Arizona Wool Growers' Association, for the more convenient handling of the Arizona business.

HUNTING LICENSES ISSUED

Figures compiled by the Biological Survey show that 5,168,353 hunting licenses were issued in the United States during the season 1925-26. Returns to the state treasuries for the same period amounted to $6,872,813. In the 1923-24 season, licenses numbered 4,395,038, and the fees paid were $5,594,982. In 1924-25, 4,904,740 hunters took out licenses, for which they paid a total of $6,190,864. Pennsylvania heads the list both in number of licenses issued and in the amount of fees paid.

OUR NATIONAL WEALTH

The national wealth of the United States in 1925, as estimated by the National Industrial Conference Board, amounted to $355,300,000,000. For the year 1922 the census estimate was $320,800,000,000, and for 1912, $186,300,000,000. Eliminating the difference in the purchasing value of the dollar, so as to render the two sets of figures exactly comparable, the national wealth of 1912 is given as $188,000,000,000, and that of 1925 as $239,900,000,000. The nominal increase of 90.7 per cent thus becomes a real increase of 27.6 per cent.

On a per-capita basis, supposing the population of the United States to be 115,000,000 in 1925, we had two years ago a distribution of wealth averaging $2,086 for every man, woman, and child, as against $1,979 in 1912, when our people numbered approximately 95,000,000.

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES

Birth rates in 1925 were lower than in 1924 in twenty-six of the thirty states for which reports have been tabulated, announces the Department of Commerce. The highest birth rate (28.8 per 1,000 population) was found in North Carolina, and the lowest (15.1) in Montana. The average for the area was 21.2, as compared with 22.6 in 1924.

Death rates were higher than in 1924 in sixteen of the thirty states. The highest rate was shown for Vermont (14.6), and the lowest (7.7) for Montana and North Dakota. For the whole area it averaged 11.7, against 11.8 in 1924.

Infant mortality was generally higher than in 1924, Maryland scoring the highest with 90.4 per 1,000 births, and Oregon the lowest with 51.2.

Her Kewpie. — Father — "There was something funny about you last night, daughter."

Offspring—"I know, but I sent him home as early as I could."—*Boston Beanpot.*

On the East Side.—Teacher—"Use 'statue' in a sentence."

Abbie—"Ven I come in last night, mine papa says: 'Statue, Abbie?' "—*Allegheny Alligator.*

Tit for Tat.—A woman who was living in a hotel in San Francisco hired a Chinese boy.

"What's your name?" she asked him.

"Fu You Tsin Mei," said he.

"Your name is too long. I'll call you John."

"What's your name, please?" said he.

"Mrs. Elmer Edward MacDonald."

"Your name too long. I call you Charlie."—*Wall Street Journal.*

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